



Also: Aziz Mehmed Effendi; Sabbateanism; Shabbateanism; Shabsazviniks; Shebsel; Zevi, Shabbetai

SHABTAI ..ZVI (1626–1676)

the central figure of Shabbateanism, the messianic movement called after him.

Background of the Movement

Shabbateanism was the largest and most momentous messianic movement in Jewish history subsequent to the destruction of the Temple and the Bar Kokhba Revolt. The factors giving rise to its extraordinarily widespread and deep-seated appeal are twofold. On the one hand there was the general condition of the Jewish people in exile, and the hopes for political and spiritual redemption fostered by Jewish religious tradition and given great emphasis in Jewish thought, which at all times could provide fertile soil for the blossoming of messianic movements aimed at ushering in redemption. On the other hand there were the specific conditions contributing to the impetus of the movement that began in 1665. Politically and socially, the position of the Jews in the various countries of the Diaspora was still basically the same and, with few exceptions, they pursued their specific way of life apart from the surrounding Christian or Muslim society, facing humiliation and persecution at every turn of political events and in constant awareness of their insecurity. The great wave of anti-Jewish persecution in Poland and Russia which set in with the Chmielnicki massacres in 1648 deeply affected Ashkenazi Jewry and had wide repercussions, especially through the large number of captives in many countries whose ransom led to lively agitation. Soon after this disaster came the Russian-Swedish War (1655) which also struck those areas of Polish Jewish settlement which had not been shattered by Chmielnicki's attacks. Important as these factors undoubtedly were to the upsurge of messianic hopes in Polish Jewry, they are not sufficient to explain what actually happened, and no doubt local conditions prevailing in various parts of the Diaspora contributed their share. But the political and social events are only one part of the story.

The central and unifying factor behind the Shabbatean movement was of a religious nature, connected with the profound metamorphosis in the religious world of Judaism caused by the spiritual renewal centered in Safed in the 16th century. Its decisive feature was the rise of the Kabbalah to a dominant position in Jewish life and particularly in those circles which were receptive to new religious impulses and formed the most active sector of the Jewish communities. The new Kabbalah which went out from Safed, especially in its Lurianic forms, wedded striking concepts to messianic ideas. It could be characterized as messianism pervading mysticism, thus introducing a new element of tension into the older Kabbalah, which was of a much more contemplative nature. Lurianic Kabbalah proclaimed an intimate bond between the religious activity of the Jew as he performs the commandments of the law and meditations for prayer and the messianic message. All being has been in exile since the very beginning of creation and the task of restoring everything to its proper place has been given to the Jewish people, whose historic fate and destiny symbolize the state of the universe at large. The sparks of Divinity are dispersed everywhere, as are the sparks of the original soul of Adam; but they are held captive by the *kelippah*, the power of evil, and must be redeemed. This final redemption, however, cannot be achieved by one single messianic act, but will be effected through a long chain of activities that

prepare the way. What the kabbalists called "restoration" (*tikkun*) implied both the process by which the shattered elements of the world would be restored to harmony—which is the essential task of the Jewish people—and the final result, the state of redemption announced by the appearance of the Messiah, who marks the last stage. Political liberation, and all that the national myth connected with it, were seen as no more than external symbols of a cosmic process which in fact takes place in the secret recesses of the universe. No conflict was foreseen between the traditional national and political content of the messianic idea and the new spiritual and mystical note which it acquired in Lurianic Kabbalah. Those susceptible to the kabbalistic theology of Judaism focused their activity on hastening the arrival of the "world of *tikkun*" by an ascetic life which, though in strict accordance with the demands of the law, was permeated with virtual messianism. This messianism, however, was not an abstract hope for a distant future: what made Lurianism a dynamic factor in Jewish history was its proclamation that almost the whole process of restoration had been completed and that the final redemption was just around the corner. Only the last stages had to be passed through and redemption would be at hand.

As they gained ascendancy and dominated religious life, ideas like these became a common catalyst for an acute precipitation of messianic fervor. In fact, Lurianic Kabbalah became a dominant factor only about 1630–40 and the ideology of the Shabbatean movement is closely connected with this development. That the movement had an overwhelming appeal to such different centers of the Diaspora as Yemen and Persia, Turkey and North Africa, Italy and the Ashkenazi communities can be explained only by the fact that the intense propaganda of Lurianism had created a climate favorable to the release of the messianic energies aroused by the victory of the new Kabbalah. This is the reason why places like Amsterdam, Leghorn, and Salonika, where the Jews lived relatively free from oppression, nevertheless became crucibles of the movement and centers of Shabbatean activities.

Shabbetai Zevi's Early Years and Personality

The figure of the man who occupied the center of the movement is a most unexpected and surprising one. By now, his biography is one of the most completely documented of any Jew who played an important role in Jewish history. Shabbetai Zevi was born in Smyrna (Ismir) on the Ninth of Av, 1626 (unless the date was manipulated to conform with the tradition that the Messiah would be born on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple). His father, Mordecai Zevi, came from the Peloponnesus (Patras?), probably from a family of Ashkenazi origin, and as a young man settled in Smyrna, where he first was a modest poultry merchant and later became an agent for Dutch and English traders. The great economic rise of Smyrna in those years made him wealthy and Shabbetai Zevi's brothers, Elijah and Joseph, were actually wealthy merchants. Shabbetai Zevi received a traditional education. His gifts being early recognized, he was destined by his family to become a *hakham*, a member of the rabbinic elite. He studied under Isaac de Alba and later under the most illustrious rabbi of Smyrna at that time, Joseph Escapa, and seems to have been ordained as a *hakham* when he was about 18. He had a thorough talmudic training and even his bitterest detractors never accused him of being an ignoramus. According to one source, he left the yeshivah at the age of 15, beginning a life of abstinence and solitude and studying without the help of teachers. He was emotionally closely attached to his mother and at an early period developed an intense inner life. Starting out on the path of asceticism he was beset by sexual temptations, references to which have survived. In his adolescent years he also embarked on the study of Kabbalah, concentrating mainly on the Zohar, *Sefer ha-Kanah*, and *Sefer ha-Peli'ah*. Having acquired considerable proficiency in kabbalistic learning, he attracted other young contemporaries who studied with him.

Between 1642 and 1648 he lived in semi-seclusion. During this period he began to display a character that conforms largely to what handbooks of psychiatry describe as an extreme case of cyclothymia or manic-depressive psychosis. Periods of profound depression and melancholy alternated with spasms of maniacal exaltation and euphoria, separated by intervals of normality. These states, which are richly documented throughout his life, persisted until his death. Later they were described by his followers not in psychopathological but in theological terms as "illumination" and "fall" or "hiding of the face" (the state where God hides his face from him). His mental affliction brought to the fore an essential trait of his character: during his periods of illumination he felt impelled to commit acts which ran counter to religious law, later called *ma'asim zarim* ("strange or paradoxical actions"). Their content changed from time to time but a predilection for strange and bizarre rituals and sudden innovations pervaded them all. One thing was constant to these exalted states—his inclination to pronounce the Ineffable Name of God, the Tetragrammaton (see God, Names of). In the periods of melancholy, which were of uneven length, he retired from human contact into solitude to wrestle with the demonic powers by which he felt attacked and partly overwhelmed. The exact moment that this illness broke out is not known, but at the latest it took place in 1648 when the news of the Chmielnicki massacres reached Smyrna. Starting to utter the Name of God in public, he possibly also proclaimed himself the Messiah for the first time. Since by then he was known to be mentally afflicted nobody took this seriously and his behavior caused no more than a temporary commotion. It seems that his extravagances aroused more compassion than antagonism. Between 1646 and 1650 he contracted two marriages in Smyrna which, since they were not consummated, ended in divorce. In his home town he was considered partly a lunatic and partly a fool, but since he had a very pleasant appearance and was highly musical, endowed with a particularly fine voice, he made friends, though not adherents of his kabbalistic speculations. In these years he began to speak of a particular "mystery of the Godhead" which had been revealed to him through his spiritual struggles. He used to speak of the "God of his faith" with whom he felt a particularly intimate and close relation. It is not clear whether by this he meant only the *Sefirah Tiferet* (see Kabbalah), which he saw as the essential manifestation of God, or some supernal power which clothed itself in this *Sefirah*. At any rate, the term *Elohei Yisrael* ("the God of Israel") took on a special mystical meaning in his parlance. His compulsion to violate the law in his illuminated states, which were sometimes accompanied by imagining experiences of levitation, and his repeated claims to be the Messiah, finally led the rabbis, including his teacher Joseph Escapa, to intervene; around 1651–54 they banished him from Smyrna.

For several years Shabbetai Zevi wandered through Greece and Thrace, staying for a long time in Salonika, where he made many

friends. But this stay also ended in disaster when, during one of his exalted states, he celebrated a ceremonial nuptial service under the canopy with the Torah, and committed other acts which were considered intolerable. Expelled by the rabbis, in 1658 he went to Constantinople, where he spent nine months. There he befriended the famous kabbalist David Habbilo (d. 1661), an emissary of the Jerusalem community. During this period he made a first attempt to rid himself of his demonic obsessions by means of practical Kabbalah. On the other hand, during one of his ecstatic periods he not only celebrated the three festivals of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot all in one week, behavior which was bound to arouse hostility, but went so far as to declare the abolition of the commandments and to pronounce a blasphemous benediction to "Him, who allows the forbidden." Expelled once more he returned to Smyrna, where he stayed until 1662, keeping mostly to himself and going through a prolonged period of profound melancholy. In 1662 he decided to settle in Jerusalem and traveled there via Rhodes and Cairo, where he made many contacts. Throughout this period there is no trace of any messianic agitation around him, and his genial and dignified behavior during his normal state of mind and his rabbinic and kabbalistic scholarship made him a respected figure. By the end of 1662 he reached Jerusalem, staying there for about a year, wandering around the holy places and tombs of the saints of old. His parents died about this time (his mother perhaps even earlier). There seems to have been a great deal of talk about his strange character and attacks of offensive behavior, but this was counterbalanced by his ascetic tenor of life. In a sudden emergency, in the fall of 1663, he was sent to Egypt as an emissary for Jerusalem and performed his mission with some success. He stayed in Cairo until the spring of 1665, becoming closely connected with the circle around Raphael Joseph Chelebi, the head of Egyptian Jewry, who was in deep sympathy with ascetic and kabbalistic tendencies.

From time to time Shabbetai Zevi's messianic fancies returned and it is probable that in one of these fits of illumination he decided to marry Sarah, an Ashkenazi girl of doubtful reputation who either had arrived by herself from Italy or was brought over on his initiative when he heard rumors about her from Italian visitors. She was an orphan of the 1648 massacres in Podolia and used to tell curious stories about herself and her upbringing by a Polish nobleman. After some years in Amsterdam she had gone to Italy, where she served with families and Jewish institutions in Mantua. Rumors that she was a woman of easy virtue preceded her and were current even later in the intimate circle of Shabbetai Zevi's admirers. Possibly influenced by the example of the prophet Hosea who married a whore, Shabbetai Zevi married Sarah in Cairo on March 31, 1664. In the winter of 1664–65, however, being troubled about his violations of the law, he tried to exorcise his demons; thus (according to his own testimony in a reliable source) he asked God to take away from him all his abnormal states, and entered an extended period of stability.

The Beginning of the Shabbatean Movement

The peripeteia in Shabbetai Zevi's life came with the news that a man of God had appeared in Gaza who disclosed to everyone the secret root of his soul and could give each person the particular formula for the *tikkun* that his soul needed. When the story of Nathan of Gaza's powers spread, Shabbetai Zevi "abandoned his mission and went to Gaza in order to find a *tikkun* and peace for his soul," in the words of the first report that has been preserved about the beginnings of the movement. Around mid-April 1665 he arrived in Gaza to visit the physician of the soul; by then the latter had had (in February 1665) an ecstatic vision of Shabbetai Zevi as the Messiah, springing no doubt from the tales about him he had heard in Jerusalem, where Nathan had studied in 1663 under Jacob Hagiz. These tales and the figure of the man whom the 20-year-old Nathan had often seen in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem had impressed themselves on his mind and crystallized in his new vision when he took up the study of Kabbalah in Gaza. Instead of curing Shabbetai Zevi of his malady, Nathan tried to convince him that he was indeed the true Messiah. At first refusing to pay any heed to his importunities, Shabbetai Zevi nevertheless accompanied Nathan on a pilgrimage to some of the holy places in Jerusalem and Hebron, during which they discussed their visions and their validity. Nathan, an outstanding young rabbi, was the first man to confirm independently Shabbetai Zevi's own messianic dreams and, moreover, to explain the peculiar rank and nature of the Messiah's soul in the kabbalistic scheme of creation. They returned to Gaza in the beginning of Sivan (mid-May). According to one story, they were celebrating the night of Shavuot in Nathan's house along with a group of rabbis, when Nathan fell into a trance and announced Shabbetai Zevi's high rank before the assembly; according to another version, this happened in the absence of Shabbetai Zevi, who had one of his attacks of melancholy and stayed away. About this time, Nathan produced an apocryphal text attributed to one Abraham he-Hasid, a contemporary of the famous Judah he-Hasid, who as it were prophesied the appearance of Shabbetai Zevi and foretold his early life in apocalyptic terms, proclaiming him the redeemer of Israel. When, some days after Shavuot, Shabbetai Zevi entered another period of illumination, he had absorbed all these new events and, now sure of himself and of Nathan's prophetic gifts, returned to his former messianic claims with renewed strength. On the 17th of Sivan (May 31, 1665), in Gaza, he proclaimed himself as the Messiah and swept with him the whole community, including its rabbi, Jacob Najara, grandson of the celebrated poet, Israel Najara. Some weeks of frenzied excitement followed. Riding around on horseback in majestic state Shabbetai Zevi summoned a group of his followers, appointing them as apostles or representatives of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

The messianic news spread like wildfire to other communities in Palestine, but encountered strong opposition from some outstanding rabbis of Jerusalem, including Abraham Amigo, Jacob Hagiz, Nathan's teacher, Samuel Garmison (Germizan), and Jacob Zemah, the famous kabbalist, who spoke out against Shabbetai Zevi. Having been denounced to the qadi of Jerusalem, he traveled to the city in a large company and succeeded in setting the mind of the qadi at rest. What exactly happened in Jerusalem in June 1665 is not clear. In kingly fashion Shabbetai Zevi circled Jerusalem seven times on horseback, winning over some of the rabbis like Samuel Primo, Mattathias Bloch, Israel Benjamin, and Moses Galante (the fact of the latter's adherence to Shabbetai Zevi was later suppressed). His conflict with the majority of the rabbis came to a head and they banished him from the town, but, after informing the rabbis of Constantinople of what happened, they apparently took no other active steps against the messianic propaganda, refraining from answering the many letters that were addressed to them about the events and maintaining an enigmatic silence throughout the following year.

Nathan, on the other hand, who now appeared as the prophet and standard-bearer of Shabbetai Zevi, and the group around him were very active. He proclaimed the need for a mass movement of repentance to facilitate the transition to the coming redemption, a step which was sure to win many hearts and could scarcely be opposed by the rabbinic authorities. People from the surrounding countries flocked to him to receive individual penance or wrote to him asking to reveal to them the root of their soul and tell them how to "restore it." Excessive fasts and other ascetic exercises became the order of the day, but Nathan proclaimed the abolition of the fast of the 17th of Tammuz which instead was celebrated as a day of joy in Gaza and Hebron. Letters went out, first to Egypt and the circle of Raphael Joseph, telling of the wondrous deeds of the prophet and the Messiah. One of the striking new features in these letters was the announcement that neither the prophet nor the Messiah was obliged to give proof of his mission by performing miracles, but that Israel should believe in Shabbetai Zevi's mission without any external proof. The actual history of the subsequent mass movement is characterized by the intrinsic contradiction between this demand for pure faith as a redeeming value and the overwhelming wave of legends and reports of miracles which swept the Diaspora. The first reports that reached Europe were, curiously enough, not about Shabbetai Zevi, but about the appearance of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, who were said to be marching under the command of a prophetic and saintly man of God about whom all sorts of miraculous stories were told. According to some versions they were conquering Mecca, according to others assembling in the Sahara Desert, and in a third version marching into Persia. Rumors of this kind, coming from Morocco, reached Holland, England, and Germany in the summer of 1665, without giving any indication of what actually had happened in Gaza or naming Shabbetai Zevi or making any mention of the appearance of a Messiah. By contrast, there was a great deal of commotion in the oriental Jewish communities, which had more direct communication with Palestine.

In September 1665, fortified by a new revelation, Nathan addressed a long letter to Raphael Joseph, announcing in the first part the changes which had taken place in the hidden worlds with the arrival of redemption and explaining what these changes entailed for the practice of kabbalistic devotions. The *kavvanot* ("meditations") of Isaac Luria were no longer valid because the inner structure of the universe had changed and no holy sparks were left under the domination of the powers of evil, the *kelippot*. The time of redemption had come, and even though some might oppose it they could not prevent it and would do harm only to themselves. Shabbetai Zevi had the power to justify the greatest sinner, even Jesus, and "whoever entertains any doubts about him, though he may be the most righteous man in the world, he [Shabbetai Zevi] may punish him with great afflictions." In the second part of the letter Nathan predicts or rather outlines the course of events from the present moment until complete redemption is achieved. Shabbetai Zevi would take the crown from the Turkish king, without war, and make the sultan his servant. After four or five years he would proceed to the River Sambatyon to bring back the lost tribes and to marry Rebecca, the 13-year-old daughter of the resuscitated Moses. During this period he would put the Turkish sultan in charge, but the latter would rebel against him in his absence. This would be the period of the "birth pangs of redemption," a time of great tribulation from which only those dwelling in Gaza would be exempt. The whole tenor of this part of the letter is legendary and mythical. Between the present time and the start of the actual messianic events there would be an interval of one year and several months which should be used for doing penance all over the Jewish world. For this purpose Nathan composed liturgies, one set for the general public and another set for the initiate, comprising *kavvanot* and mystical prayers for the extended fasts prescribed by him. These were sent out to Europe and other places along with the first long announcements regarding the advent of the Messiah in the fall of 1665.

Shabbetai Zevi in Smyrna and Constantinople

The first reports about Shabbetai Zevi reached Europe early in October 1665, and in the following two months detailed accounts, deeply imbued with legendary material, arrived in Italy, Holland, Germany, and Poland. Why all the correspondents from Gaza, Jerusalem, and Egypt who became so eloquent from September 1665 onward kept silent during the three months after the events in Gaza is still unexplained. There is also a considerable gap between the events in Europe after the news finally came through and what happened in those months to Shabbetai Zevi himself. When he left Jerusalem under a cloud, probably before the fast of the 17th of Tammuz, he proceeded through Safed to Aleppo, where he arrived on the 8th of Av (July 20, 1665) and left on August 12. Although his fame had preceded him, he refused to appear publicly as the Messiah, but talked to several people in private, including Solomon Laniado and other members of the rabbinic court who became his enthusiastic supporters. Similarly, when he arrived in Smyrna a short time before Rosh Ha-Shanah (beginning of September 1665) he kept to himself for a long time, staying with his brother Elijah. In the meantime, a great commotion flared up in Aleppo where, in October and November, the first phenomena of Shabbatean prophesying appeared. Not only unlettered people, men and women, were swept up in the excitement, but also rabbis and scholars, such as Moses Galante from Jerusalem who had come as an emissary and was caught up in the general turmoil, also following Shabbetai Zevi to Smyrna and Constantinople. From Aleppo there is the first testimony, outside Palestine, about a general revivalist atmosphere in which there were reports of appearances of the prophet Elijah and a common fund was set up to maintain the poor and those who would be affected by the widespread halt in commercial activities.

Although Shabbetai Zevi's arrival in Smyrna was preceded by all kinds of letters and rumors which were bound to have precipitated much tension and many expectations, nothing spectacular happened for almost three months. The rabbis of Smyrna had received a letter from the rabbinate of Constantinople about Shabbetai Zevi's excommunication in Jerusalem, yet no action was taken against him. It was only when his state of ecstasy returned, in early December, and he became feverishly active in his own way, starting a wild commotion and performing many of his "strange acts," that the rabbis made an attempt to stop him; but by then it was too late. The enthusiasm and excitement he engendered swept Smyrna Jewry off its feet. Within a period of three weeks, the community was thrown into an uproar and the intensity and public character of the proceedings assured them the widest possible echo. There were not only several thousands of Jews but also a considerable merchant colony of English, Dutch, and Italian traders whose reports to their European friends supplemented the news that now began to stream out of Smyrna from Jewish sources. Although Shabbetai Zevi was in continuous correspondence with Nathan, he now acted on his own. The stormy

events that followed are fully documented in many sources.

Shabbetai Zevi used to recite the morning prayers in one of the synagogues "with a very agreeable voice that greatly pleased those who heard him"; he gave alms very liberally; rose at midnight to perform ritual immersions in the sea; and there was nothing bizarre about his ascetic behavior. But on one of the first days of Hanukkah he appeared "in royal apparel" in the synagogue and created a great sensation by his ecstatic singing. About the same time a delegation arrived from Aleppo—Moses Galante and Daniel Pinto and two laymen—who had first made a visit to the prophet in Gaza and now wished to greet him officially as the Messiah of Israel. During Hanukkah week, Shabbetai Zevi "began to do things that seemed strange: he pronounced the Ineffable Name, ate [forbidden] fats, and did other things against the Lord and His Law, even pressing others to do likewise," behavior characteristic of his states of illumination. The infectious presence of believers spurred him on to more radical manifestations. A deep cleft became evident between the majority of "believers" and a minority of "infidels," and *ma'aminim* and *koferim* became the fixed terms for those who adhered to faith in Shabbetai Zevi and those who opposed him. Nathan's epistle to Raphael Joseph was widely distributed and contributed to the growing dissension. To a large extent the common people joined the camp of the believers without inhibitions or theological misgivings; the glad tidings conquered their hearts, and the fascination of Shabbetai Zevi's personality, with its strange mixture of solemn dignity and unrestrained license, contributed its share. Hundreds of people, largely drawn from the poorer elements of the community, accompanied him wherever he went. But from the beginning many burghers, wealthy merchants, and brokers joined the movement, as well as rabbinic scholars, including some of his former fellow students.

The three members of the rabbinic court who were still opposed to Shabbetai Zevi deliberated the wisdom of opening proceedings against him. Proclaiming public prayers in reaction, Shabbetai Zevi once more indulged his taste for majestic pomp and behaved with great audacity. On Friday, December 11, the crowd tried to storm the house of Hayyim Pena, one of the leading "infidels," and on the following day matters came to a head. After beginning to recite the morning prayers in one of the synagogues, Shabbetai Zevi broke off and, accompanied by a large crowd, proceeded to the locked doors of the Portuguese congregation, the headquarters of his opponents. Taking up an ax, he started to smash the doors, whereupon his opponents opened them and let him in. An astonishing scene followed. Shabbetai Zevi read the portion of the Torah not from the customary scroll but from a printed copy; ignoring the priests and levites present, he called up to the reading of the Law his brothers and many other men and women, distributing kingdoms to them and demanding that all of them pronounce the Ineffable Name in their blessings. In a furious speech against the unbelieving rabbis, he compared them to the unclean animals mentioned in the Bible. He proclaimed that the Messiah b. Joseph, who according to aggadic tradition must precede the advent of the son of David, was a certain Abraham Zalman, who had died a martyr's death in 1648, and recited the prayer for the dead in his honor. Then he went up to the ark, took a holy scroll in his arms, and sang an ancient Castilian love song about "Meliselda, the emperor's daughter"; into this song, known as his favorite throughout his life, he read many kabbalistic mysteries. After explaining them to the congregation, he ceremonially proclaimed himself the "anointed of the God of Jacob," the redeemer of Israel, fixing the date of redemption for the 15th of Sivan 5426 (June 18, 1666). This was in conformity with a date announced by Nathan in one of his more optimistic moods, when he considered the possibility of an earlier advent than originally predicted. Shabbetai Zevi announced that in a short time he would seize the crown of "the great Turk." When Hayyim Benveniste, one of the dissenting rabbis present, asked him for proof of his mission, he flew into a rage and excommunicated him, at the same time calling on some of those present to testify to their faith by uttering the Ineffable Name. The dramatic scene amounted to a public messianic announcement and the substitution of a messianic Judaism for the traditional and imperfect one. There is reliable testimony that, besides other innovations in the law, he promised the women that he would set them free from the curse of Eve. Immediately after this Sabbath he dispatched one of his rabbinical followers to Constantinople to make preparations for his arrival.

In the wave of excitement Benveniste's doubts were carried away and on the following day he joined the camp of the believers. A smoldering conflict between him and one of the other members of the court, Aaron Lapapa, may have played some part in his conversion. At any rate, on the 5th of Tevet (December 23) Shabbetai Zevi engineered the expulsion of Lapapa from his office and the appointment of Benveniste as the sole chief rabbi of Smyrna. Summoned before the qadi once more to explain his behavior, Shabbetai Zevi again succeeded in reassuring him. In the next few days all the believers were asked to come and kiss the hand of the messianic king; most of the community did so, including some "infidels" who were afraid of the mounting terrorism of the believers. Immediately after this regal ceremony, Shabbetai Zevi decreed the abolition of the fast of the Tenth of Tevet. When this act aroused the opposition of some of the rabbis, the angry crowd wanted to attack them. Solomon Algazi, a great scholar and famous kabbalist who persisted in his opposition, was forced to flee to Magnesia and his house was plundered. Lapapa hid in the house of one of his colleagues. On the following Sabbath the name of the Turkish sultan was struck out from the prayer for the ruler and a formal prayer for Shabbetai Zevi as the messianic king of Israel was instituted, a custom later followed by many communities throughout the Diaspora. Instead of his actual name, the practice began at this time of calling him by the appellation *amirah*, an abbreviation of *Adoneinu Malkenu yarum hodo* ("our Lord and King, may his majesty be exalted") and an allusion to the term emir. The new term was widely used in Shabbatean literature up to the beginning of the 19th century.

A festive atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm marked the succeeding days. Many people from other Turkish communities arrived and joined the movement, among them Abraham Yakhini, a famous preacher and kabbalist in Constantinople, who had known Shabbetai Zevi since 1658 and now became one of his most active propagandists. In a fit of mass hysteria, people from all classes of society started to prophesy about Shabbetai Zevi. Men, women, and children fell into a trance, declaiming acknowledgments of Shabbetai Zevi as Messiah and biblical passages of a messianic nature. When their senses returned, they remembered nothing. About 150 "prophets" arose in Smyrna, among them Shabbetai Zevi's wife and the daughters of some of the "infidels." Some had visions of Shabbetai Zevi's crown or saw him sitting on the throne, but most of them produced a mere jumble of phrases and quotations from the Bible and the prayer book, repeated over and over again. Trade and commerce came to

a standstill; dancing and festive processions alternated with the penitential exercises prescribed by Nathan. Psalm 21, which had been given a Shabbatean interpretation in Gaza, was recited at each of the three daily services, a custom which spread to many other communities. As well as distributing the kingdoms of the earth among the faithful, Shabbetai Zevi appointed counterparts of the ancient Israelite kings from David to Zerubbabel and several of these obtained handwritten patents from the Messiah. The appointees were his main supporters in Smyrna but included some of his devotees from Palestine, Egypt, Aleppo, Constantinople, and Bursa (Brussa). Many other messianic dignitaries were appointed. After this, his last activity in Smyrna, Shabbetai Zevi sailed to Constantinople on Dec. 30, 1665, accompanied by some of his "kings." His behavior during this period was as consistent as his unstable mind would allow: he was sure of his calling and believed that some supernatural intervention would bring his messianic mission to fruition. In the meantime the Turkish authorities in the capital had been aroused by the alarming reports. The news from Gaza and Smyrna had already divided the community and the waves of excitement rose high. Letters from places through which Shabbetai Zevi had passed combined factual reports with increasingly fanciful stories and raised the messianic fever to an even higher pitch. Even before his arrival a prophet arose in Constantinople, Moses Serviel or Suriel, a young rabbi from Bursa who, unlike the other "prophets," revealed Shabbatean mysteries in the language of the Zohar and was credited with a particular charisma. The Messiah's arrival was considerably delayed by extremely stormy weather and in the meantime the atmosphere in the capital became critical. Some of the heads of the community seem to have warned the government, which had already taken steps to arrest Shabbetai Zevi in Smyrna, where the order arrived too late, or on his arrival in Constantinople. The non-Jewish population was caught up in the excitement and satirical songs about the Messiah were sung in the streets, while the Jewish masses, certain that many miracles would take place immediately after his arrival, showed a marked pride before the gentiles.

The policy pursued by the grand vizier, Ahmed K[prlc (Kuprili), one of Turkey's ablest statesmen, is remarkable for its restraint. Revolts were frequent in Turkey and the rebels were generally speedily put to death. That this was not the immediate consequence of Shabbetai Zevi's arrest after interception by boat in the Sea of Marmara on Feb. 6, 1666, did much to strengthen the belief of the faithful. Amid great commotion, he was brought ashore in chains on Monday, February 8. By this time the disruption of normal life and commerce had reached a peak. One or two days after his arrest, Shabbetai Zevi was brought before the divan, presided over by K[prlc. Since the Turkish archives from this period were destroyed by fire, no official Turkish documents about the movement and the proceedings in this case have survived, and reports from Jewish and Christian sources in Constantinople are conflicting. It is true, however, that the vizier showed surprising leniency and patience, to which Shabbetai Zevi's undoubted charm and the fascination of his personality may have contributed. He may have wanted to avoid making a martyr of a Messiah who, after all, had not taken up arms against the sultan and had simply proclaimed an unrealistic mystical take-over of the crown. Shabbetai Zevi was put in prison, at first in a "dark dungeon" but later in fairly comfortable quarters, and the high official responsible for the police and the prison, possibly after accepting substantial bribes, permitted him to receive visits from his followers. It was said that he could have obtained his release by a very large bribe which his followers were prepared to pay, but that he refused, thereby greatly enhancing his reputation. He was still self-confident. During this period, he had returned to a normal state, led an ascetic life, preached repentance and claimed no special privileges. The rabbis of the capital who visited him in prison found a dignified scholar who bore his sufferings with an air of nobility, rather than a sinner who set himself above the Law and tradition. The rabbis were divided among themselves, some of the outstanding ones, among them Abraham Al-Nakawa, taking his side. A new set of miracles was reported in the letters written during those months from Constantinople, proving that the enthusiasm continued unabated. When the sultan and the vizier left for the war on Crete, the order was given to transfer Shabbetai Zevi to the fortress of Gallipoli, where important political prisoners were detained, on the European side of the Dardanelles. The transfer was made on April 19, the day before Passover. Once more in the grip of a state of illumination, Shabbetai Zevi sacrificed a Passover lamb and roasted it with its fat, inducing his companions to eat this forbidden food and blessing it with the now customary blessing of "He who permits the forbidden." By means of bribes, the believers soon converted his detention into honorable confinement, and the fortress became known as Migdal Oz ("tower of strength"), with reference to Proverbs 18:10.

The Movement in the Diaspora

The letters arriving in all parts of the Diaspora from Palestine, Egypt, and Aleppo in October and November 1665, and later from Smyrna and Constantinople, produced a tremendous excitement, and the similarity of the reactions everywhere indicates that the causes of the response went far beyond local factors. Messianic fervor took hold of communities that had no immediate experience of persecution and bloodshed as well as those which had. Social and religious factors were no doubt inextricably combined in the outbreak. Poverty and persecution bred Utopian hopes, but the situation of the Jewish people as a whole provided the relevant background. Although the Lurianic doctrine of tikkun and redemption expressed a social situation too, its real content was essentially religious. It is this interlocking of the various elements in the historical makeup of the Shabbatean movement which accounts for its dynamics and explosive content. Later the movement was presented in a different light in a strenuous attempt to minimize the part played by the upper strata of Jewish society and the spiritual leaders, and to ascribe the vehemence of the outbreak to the blind enthusiasm of the rabble and the poor, but this is not borne out by contemporary evidence. The response showed none of the uniformity based on class conditions. Many of the rich took a leading part in spreading the messianic propaganda, although there was no lack of those who, as the saying went at the time, "were more interested in great profits than in great prophets."

Five factors contributed to the overwhelming success of the messianic awakening:

- (1) The messianic call came from the Holy Land, from the center that stood for pure spirituality at its most intense.

A message from there would be received in Persia, Kurdistan, or Yemen with a respect which it could scarcely command had it arrived from Poland or Italy. The tremendous prestige of the new Kabbalah which emanated from Safed also played a part.

(2) The renewal of prophecy with the conspicuous figure of Nathan, the brilliant scholar and severe ascetic turned prophet, helped to obscure the more dubious facets of Shabbetai Zevi's personality which, indeed, played little or no role in the consciousness of the mass of the believers.

(3) The efficacy of traditional and popular apocalyptic beliefs, whose elements were not relinquished but reinterpreted, played its part. The old eschatological visions were retained but many new elements were absorbed. The conception of the future was, throughout 1666, thoroughly conservative. At the same time, however, the propaganda was also addressed to a widespread group of kabbalists, to whom it presented a system of ambiguous symbols. Nathan's symbolism satisfied his readers by its traditional terminology, and the apparent continuity enabled the new elements to exist, undetected, under cover of the older kabbalism.

(4) The prophet's call to repentance played a decisive role, appealing to the noblest longings in every Jewish heart. Who, even among the movement's opponents, could condemn the one demand which the prophet and the Messiah made in public?

(5) There was, as yet, no differentiation between the various elements taking part in the movement. Conservative minds, responding to their sense of unbroken continuity, saw in it the promise of fulfillment of traditional expectations. At the same time the message of redemption appealed to the utopianists who longed for a new age and would shed no tears for the passing of the old order. The national character of the movement obscured these contrasts in the emotional makeup of its participants.

Since the main mass outbreaks of the movement occurred in places far removed from the scene of Shabbetai Zevi's own activities, and Nathan the prophet never actually left Palestine, during the heyday of the events people were dependent on letters and other means of communication which presented a wild mixture of fact and fancy, the latter no less appealing to emotion and the imagination than the former. To a large measure the movement developed out of its own momentum, adapting new features to older traditions and conceptions. There is nothing surprising in the similarity of the phenomena in places far distant; they correspond both to the basic similarity of the Jewish situation and the traditional response to it, and to the uniformity of the propaganda that came from the believers in Turkey. Of some importance in Europe were many reports from Christian sources, which of course depended mostly on Jewish informants but added exaggerations and distortions of their own. The many broadsheets and pamphlets that appeared during 1666 in English, Dutch, German, and Italian were avidly read by the Jews and often taken as independent sources confirming their own news. A secondary factor was the sympathy shown to the movement by millenarian circles in England, Holland, and Germany, since it seemed to confirm the belief widespread in these groups that Christ's second coming would occur in 1666. Peter Serrarius in Amsterdam, one of the leading millenarians, did much to spread Shabbatean propaganda to his many Christian correspondents. There are, however, no grounds for the assumption that the outbreak of the movement itself was due to the influence of Christian millenarian merchants on Shabbetai Zevi during his years in Smyrna.

While the majority of the people in those communities of which we have firsthand knowledge, and in those influenced by them, joined in the general enthusiasm, led everywhere by a group of devoted and determined believers, there were also many instances of bitter quarrels and differences with the "infidels." A mounting wave of messianic terrorism threatened those who spoke derisively of Shabbetai Zevi and refused to take part in the general excitement. A number of influential rabbis, who in their hearts were skeptical about the whole upheaval (like Samuel Aboab in Venice), were careful not to antagonize their communities, and cases of open rabbinical opposition were somewhat rare. Such stubborn adversaries were Joseph ha-Levi, the preacher of the community at Leghorn, and Jacob Sasportas, who had no official position at the time, and was staying in Hamburg as a refugee from the plague in London. A highly articulate and learned letter writer, he maintained a vivid correspondence with friends and acquaintances, and even with people unknown to him, to inquire about the truth of the events and to voice carefully worded opposition to the believers, though using words of strong condemnation to those who shared his opinion. Later (in 1669) he assembled (and heavily edited) large parts of this correspondence in *Zizat Novel Zevi*.

Repentance alternating with public manifestations of joy and enthusiasm was the order of the day, and detailed reports from many parts of the Diaspora describe the excessive lengths to which the penitents went. Fasts and repeated ritual baths, mortifications which were frequently of an extreme character, and lavish almsgiving were practiced everywhere. Many people fasted for the whole week; those who could not manage this fasted for two or three consecutive days every week and women and children at least every Monday and Thursday. "The ritual bath was so crowded that it was almost impossible to enter there." The daily devotions for day and night arranged by Nathan were recited, and many editions of them were published in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Prague, Mantua, and Constantinople. At night people would lie down naked in the snow for half an hour and scourge themselves with thorns and nettles. Commerce came to a standstill everywhere. Many sold their houses and property to provide themselves with money for the journey to the Holy Land, while others made no such preparations, being convinced that they would be transported on clouds. More realistic wealthy believers made arrangements for renting ships to transport the poor to Palestine. Reports from small towns and hamlets in Germany prove that the messianic revival was not limited to the larger centers. From many places delegations left to visit Shabbetai Zevi, bearing parchments signed by the leaders of the community which

acknowledged him as the Messiah and king of Israel. A new era was inaugurated: letters and even some published books were dated from "the first year of the renewal of the prophecy and the kingdom." Preachers exhorted the people to restore all ill-gotten gains, but no cases where this was actually done are on record. People waited avidly for letters from the Holy Land, Smyrna, and Constantinople which were often read in public, giving rise to great excitement and frequently to violent discussions. There were hardly any differences in the reactions of Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Italian, and Oriental Jewry, and in congregations composed largely of former Marranos—such as the "Portuguese" communities of Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Salonika—the messianic fervor was particularly strong. In North Africa, where the movement struck deep roots, a former Marrano, the physician Abraham Miguel Cardozo in Tripoli, became one of the most active protagonists. Other active supporters were the rabbis of Morocco, many of whom were well acquainted with Elisha Hayyim b. Jacob Ashkenazi, the father of Nathan the prophet, through his visits to their country as an emissary of Jerusalem. Poems in honor of Shabbetai Zevi and Nathan were composed in Yemen, Kurdistan, Constantinople, Salonika, Venice, Ancona, Amsterdam, and many other places, but at the same time one of the outstanding opponents of the movement in Italy, the poet Jacob Frances in Mantua, with the help of his brother Immanuel, composed a passionate set of verses denouncing the movement, its heroes, and followers (*Zevi Muddah*). But these were lone voices in the wilderness; that the Italian communities were generally enraptured is vividly revealed in the notebook of a Jew from Casale who traveled throughout northern Italy at the end of 1665 and the early months of 1666, reflecting in his spontaneous descriptions the atmosphere prevailing there (*Zion*, 10 (1945), 55–56). Moses Zacuto, the most esteemed kabbalist of Italy, gave somewhat reluctant support to the movement. Some Jews who had settled in the Holy Land sent glowing reports about the awakening to their contemporaries in the Diaspora, but it can be said in general that everyone wrote to everyone else. Even the wife of a poor wretch from Hamburg who lay in prison in Oslo faithfully reported to him in Yiddish on the latest news received in Hamburg. At the other end of the scale Abraham Pereira, said to be the richest Jew in Amsterdam and certainly a deeply devout man, lent his enormous prestige to the cause and, after publishing a comprehensive book of morals for repentant sinners (*La Certeza del Camino*, 1666), left with his entourage for the Levant, although he was held up in Leghorn. In Poland and Russia boundless enthusiasm prevailed. Preachers encouraged the repentance movement, which acquired yet more extravagant modes of expression. No opposition from the rabbinical side is recorded. In public processions of joy the Jews carried portraits of Shabbetai Zevi taken from Christian broadsheets, provoking riots in many places such as Pinsk, Vilna, and Lublin, until in early May 1666 the Polish king forbade such demonstrations of Jewish pride. The living memory of the massacres from 1648 to 1655 gave the movement overwhelming popular appeal.

The news of Shabbetai Zevi's arrest in Gallipoli in no way diminished the enthusiasm; on the contrary, the fact that he was not executed and seemingly held in an honorable state only tended to confirm his mission. Samuel Primo, whom Shabbetai Zevi employed as his secretary (scribe), was a past master of the majestic and bombastic phrase and his letters conveyed an aura of imperial grandeur. Shabbetai Zevi signed these pronouncements as the "firstborn son of God," "your father Israel," "the bridegroom of the Torah," and other high-flown titles; even when he started signing some of his letters "I am the Lord your God Shabbetai Zevi" only a few of the believers seem to have been shocked. Moses Galante later claimed to have left him because of this. No reliable account of Shabbetai Zevi's conduct during the first period of his arrest in Gallipoli has been preserved, but there are indications that he had frequent periods of melancholy. When he entered an elevated state of illumination once more, people flocked to him in great numbers and the prison, with the help of bribes, was converted into a kind of royal court. The "king," who made no bones about his messianic claims, impressed his visitors deeply. An official letter from the rabbis of Constantinople to the rabbinate of Jerusalem, asking them to set up a commission of inquiry consisting of four representatives from Jerusalem, Safed, and Hebron, remained unanswered. When in March 1666 the rabbis of Venice asked for an opinion of the Constantinople rabbinate, they were given a positive answer disguised as a commercial communication about the quality of the goat skins "which Rabbi Israel of Jerusalem has bought." They wrote: "We looked into the matter and examined the merchandise of Rabbi Israel, for his goods are displayed here under our very eyes. We have come to the conclusion that they are very valuable... but we must wait until the day of the great fair comes." Hundreds of prophets arose in the capital and the excitement reached fever pitch. As the fasts of the 17th of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av approached, Shabbetai Zevi's euphoria mounted; he not only proclaimed the abolition of the fasts but instituted new festivals in their stead. The 17th of Tammuz became the "day of the revival of Shabbetai Zevi's spirit" and, indulging in prescribing in minute detail the liturgy to be recited on this occasion, he turned the Ninth of Av into the festival of his birthday. In Turkey, where the news was quickly spread, almost everybody followed his instructions and the day was celebrated as a high holiday. A delegation from Poland, among whose members were the son and son-in-law of R. David ha-Levi of Lvov, the greatest rabbinic authority of his country, visited him during the week following the 17th of Tammuz and found him in an ecstatic frame of mind. His dignity and majestic deportment conquered their hearts.

Many pilgrims believed the Messiah's imprisonment to be no more than a symbolic, outward show, a belief supported by a kabbalistic tract by Nathan, "A disquisition about the dragons," written during the summer of 1666. In it Shabbetai Zevi's particular psychology was explained in terms of a metaphysical biography of the Messiah's soul and its struggles with the demonic powers from the time of creation until his earthly incarnation. These struggles left their mark on him and explain the alternations between the times when he is held a prisoner by the *kelippot* and his periods of illumination, when the supernal light shines upon him. Even in faraway Yemen, where the excitement ran high, the details of Shabbetai Zevi's biography (based on a mixture of fact and legend) were expounded in a kabbalistic fashion by the anonymous author of an apocalypse, "The valley of vision," written late in 1666. As early as July the delegates from Poland were handed, under Shabbetai Zevi's signature, a kabbalistic tract explaining the events of his life as founded on deep mysteries. Even in Palestine and Egypt, where the letters abolishing the fast of the Ninth of Av could not have been received in time, the initiative for the abolition was taken by Nathan of Gaza and his followers, among whom Mattathias Bloch was very active in Egypt. Nathan himself planned more than once to meet Shabbetai Zevi but actually never left Gaza. There was a minority of "infidels" in Egypt too, including some outstanding Palestinian rabbis who had settled there, but in the face of the general enthusiasm they behaved very cautiously. In Algiers and

Morocco the movement encountered no serious opposition on the part of the rabbis and leaders of the community.

Shabbetai Zevi's Apostasy

The movement reached its climax in July and August 1666 when everyone waited expectantly for great events to unfold. The turning point came in an unforeseen way. A Polish kabbalist, Nehemiah ha-Kohen from Lvov or its vicinity, came to see Shabbetai Zevi, apparently on behalf of some Polish communities. Arriving on September 3 or 4, he spent two or three days with him. The reports about their meeting are conflicting and in part clearly legendary. According to one source, Nehemiah argued less on kabbalistic grounds than as a spokesman of popular apocalyptic tradition, which he interpreted in strictly literal fashion. He failed to see any correspondence between Shabbetai Zevi's activities and the predictions of older aggadic writings on the Messiah. Dissatisfied by kabbalistic reinterpretations, he stressed the absence of a visible Messiah b. Joseph who should have preceded Shabbetai Zevi. Other sources maintain that the argument was about Nehemiah's own role since he himself claimed to be the Messiah b. Joseph, an assertion rejected by his host. Whatever the fact, the acrimonious debate ended in disaster. Nehemiah suddenly declared, in the presence of the Turkish guards, his willingness to adopt Islam. He was taken to Adrianople, where he denounced Shabbetai Zevi for fomenting sedition. No doubt the Jewish masses blamed Nehemiah for subsequent events, and even after his later return to Judaism in Poland he was persecuted for the rest of his life for having surrendered the Messiah to the Turks. However, it is quite possible that Nehemiah's action was simply a pretext and that the Turkish authorities had by then become alarmed by the events taking place in their country. There are indications of several complaints about Shabbetai Zevi, including charges of immoral behavior. The bustle and exuberance at Gallipoli came to an end when, on September 12 or 13, messengers arrived from Adrianople, and took the prisoner there on September 15.

On the following day he was brought before the divan, in the presence of the sultan, who watched the proceedings from a latticed alcove. Once more, the accounts of what happened at the court are contradictory. The believers reported that he was in one of his low melancholic states, and, behaving with utter passivity, allowed events to take their course. They depicted his apostasy as an act imposed on him, in which he took no part at all. The facts were certainly different although he may well have been in one of his low states at the time. He was examined by the court or privy council and denied—as he had done before under similar circumstances—ever having made messianic claims. According to some he even made a long speech about this. Finally he was given the choice between being put to death immediately or converting to Islam. According to one source, Kasim Pasha, one of the highest officials and a little later the brother-in-law of the sultan, conducted the decisive talk, "so handling him that he was glad to turn Turk." But all other sources agree that this role was played by the sultan's physician, Mustapha Hayatizade, an apostate Jew. He convinced Shabbetai Zevi to accept the court's offer, which apparently had been decided upon before he himself was brought in. The physician acted mainly as an interpreter, Shabbetai Zevi's Turkish being rather poor at the time. Sultan Mehmed IV, a deeply religious man, was likely to sympathize with the possibility that such an outstanding Jewish personality might induce many of his followers to take the same step, and the council's action was certainly also influenced by tactical considerations. Agreeing to apostatize and put on the turban, Shabbetai Zevi assumed the name Aziz Mehmed Effendi. Being considered an important convert, he was granted the honorary title of *Kapı'ı Bashi* ("keeper of the palace gates"). A royal pension of 150 piasters per day was added to the appointment. Several of the believers who had accompanied him followed him into apostasy, as did his wife when she was brought from Gallipoli some time later. The date of the conversion, Sept. 15, 1666, is confirmed by many sources. Shabbetai Zevi's state of mind after his apostasy was one of deep dejection, as evidenced by a letter written one week later to his brother Elijah.

After the Apostasy Until Shabbetai Zevi's Death

The apostasy produced a profound shock, paralyzing leaders and followers alike. In wide circles it was simply not believed and it took some time until the truth was accepted. The waves of excitement had been high, but deeper feelings were involved: for many believers the experience of the messianic revival had taken on the dimensions of a new spiritual reality. The tremendous upheaval of a whole year had led them to equate their emotional experience with an outward reality which seemed to confirm it. Now they were faced with a cruel dilemma: to admit that their belief had been wholly in vain and that their redeemer was an imposter, or to cling to their belief and inner experience in the face of outward hostile reality and look for an explanation and justification of what had happened. That many accepted the second alternative and refused to give in proves the depth of the movement. Because of this, the movement did not come to an abrupt end with the apostasy, an act which in all other circumstances would have terminated it automatically. Who could have dreamed of a Messiah who would forswear his allegiance to Judaism? On the other hand, the rabbis and communal leaders, particularly in Turkey, acted with great circumspection. Their policy was to hush up the whole affair, to calm the excitement by pretending that little had actually happened, and to restore Jewish life to the "normal" state of exile, for which the best method was to ignore the whole course of events and to let time and oblivion heal the wound. This policy was widely followed in other countries. If it were asked how a whole nation could have been allowed to nourish such high hopes only to be deceived at the end, no discussion of God's inscrutable counsels could be allowed. There was also the apprehension, particularly in Turkey, that the authorities might proceed against the Jewish leaders who had permitted the preparations for a messianic revolt, and it appears that the Turkish authorities desisted from taking such a step only after considerable vacillation. In Italy, the pages in the Jewish community records which bore witness to the events were removed and destroyed on the order of the rabbis. Official silence also descended on the literature published in Hebrew for many years. Only dim echoes of lawsuits connected with it and other hints at the movement of repentance appeared here and there.

The facts, however, were different. Again, Nathan of Gaza played a decisive role although it remains an open question whether

the initiative for a "theological" explanation of the apostasy was taken by him or by Shabbetai Zevi after he had recovered from his stupor. When Nathan received the news from Shabbetai Zevi's circle in early November 1666 he immediately announced that it was all a deep mystery which would resolve itself in due time. He left Gaza with a large entourage in order to arrange a meeting with Shabbetai Zevi, who by then had received instruction in the religion of Islam. The rabbis of Constantinople, most of whom had given up their belief, took steps to prevent this. Traveling first to Smyrna, where a considerable group of believers persisted in their faith, Nathan stayed there during March and April; although very reserved in all his relations with outsiders, he began to defend the apostasy and Shabbetai Zevi's continued messianic mission to the believers. The central point of his argument was that the apostasy was in reality the fulfillment of a mission to lift up the holy sparks which were dispersed even among the gentiles and concentrated now in Islam. Whereas the task of the Jewish people had been to restore the sparks of their own souls in the process of *tikkun* according to the demands of the Torah, there were sparks which only the Messiah himself could redeem, and for this he had to go down into the realm of the *kelippah*, outwardly to submit to its domination but actually to perform the last and most difficult part of his mission by conquering the *kelippah* from within. In doing this he was acting like a spy sent into the enemy camp. Nathan linked this exposition with his earlier metaphysical explanation of the biography of Shabbetai Zevi as a struggle with the realm of evil, to which his "strange actions" bore witness even in his earthly life. The apostasy was nothing but the most extreme case of such strange actions. He had to take upon himself the shame of being called a traitor to his own people as the last step before revealing himself in all his glory on the historical scene. By placing the paradox of an apostate Messiah, a tragic but still legitimate redeemer, at the center of the new, developing *Shabbatean* theology, Nathan laid the foundation for the ideology of the believers for the next 100 years. He, and many others after him, searched the Bible, *Talmud*, Midrash, and kabbalistic literature for references to this basic paradox and came up with a rich harvest of daring, audacious, and often outright heretical reinterpretations of the older sacred texts. Once the basic paradox was admitted, everything seemed to fall in line. All the objectionable acts of the biblical heroes, strange tales of the *aggadah* (*aggadot shel dofi*), and enigmatic passages of the Zohar—everything seemed to point, in typological exegesis, to the scandalous behavior of the Messiah. With Shabbetai Zevi's acquiescence, these ideas were taken up by the heads of the believers and given wide circulation. The rabbis forbade discussion of these heretical ideas, which would be refuted by their very paradoxicality. In the meantime they simply ignored them.

During 1667–68 the excitement slowly ebbed. When Nathan tried to see Shabbetai Zevi in Adrianople, he was met in Ipsala by a delegation of rabbis who forced him to sign a promise that he would give up his design (May 31, 1667). In spite of this he visited Shabbetai Zevi and continued to visit him from time to time and to proclaim him as the true Messiah, announcing several dates for the expected final revelation. On Shabbetai Zevi's orders he went to Rome for the performance of a secret magic ritual destined to hasten the fall of the representative of Christendom. His appearance in Venice on Passover 1668 created a great sensation. The rabbis published a pamphlet summing up the interrogations in Ipsala and Venice, and claiming that Nathan had denounced his errors. Nathan repudiated all these declarations and was obviously supported by a considerable number of believers. He completed his mission in Rome and returned to the Balkans, where he spent the rest of his life, alternating between Adrianople, Sofia, Kastoria, and Salonika, all places with a strong *Shabbatean* following.

Shabbetai Zevi himself lived in Adrianople and sometimes in Constantinople until 1672, succeeding in being allowed to lead a double life, performing the duties of a Muslim but also observing large parts of Jewish ritual. The Turks expected him to act as a missionary, but the 200 heads of families whom he drew to Islam were all secret believers whom he admonished to remain together as a group of secret fighters against the *kelippah*. Periods of illumination and depression continued to alternate, and during the sometimes lengthy periods of illumination he acted in the same manner as before: he instituted new festivals, confirmed his mystical mission, and persuaded people to follow him into Islam, which by then was called "the Torah of grace," in contradistinction to Judaism, "the Torah of truth." Several reports about his libertinism during "illumination" seem well founded. In one of these periods, in April 1671, he divorced his wife, but took her back when the illumination left him although he had already made arrangements for another marriage. A Hebrew chronicle by one of his visitors describes in detail his extraordinary behavior. Revelations by celestial agents, of which some accounts have been preserved, were frequent in his circle. Primo, Yakhini, and Nathan frequently visited him but were never asked to embrace Islam, and they were accepted by the believers in Turkey as his legitimate spokesmen. Although they were still very strong in the Balkans and Asiatic Turkey, the *Shabbateans* were gradually driven underground but were not actually excommunicated. The borderline between the apostates and those who remained Jews sometimes became blurred although the latter were generally noted for their extremely pious and ascetic way of life. Shabbetai Zevi himself, who enjoyed the sultan's favor, formed connections with some Muslim mystics among the Dervish orders. Letters between his group and the believers in North Africa, Italy, and other places spread the new theology and helped to create an increasingly sectarian spirit. After a denunciation of his double-faced behavior and sexual license by some Jews and Muslims, supported by a large bribe, Shabbetai Zevi was arrested in Constantinople in August 1672. The grand vizier wavered between executing or deporting him, but finally decided to exile him, in January 1673, to Dulcigno in Albania, which the *Shabbateans* called Alkum after Proverbs 30:31. Although allowed relative freedom, he disappeared from public view, but some of his main supporters continued their pilgrimages, apparently disguised as Muslims. In 1674 his wife, Sarah, died and he married Esther (in other sources called Jochebed), the daughter of Joseph Filosof, a respected rabbi of Salonika and one of his chief supporters. From time to time during "illuminations," he still envisioned his return to his former state and considered that the final redemption was near.

During the last ten years of his life, especially in Adrianople, he used to reveal to the elect—frequently before he demanded their submission to "mystical apostasy"—his special version of the "mystery of the Godhead." According to this the "God of Israel" was not the first cause or *Ein-Sof*, but "a second cause, dwelling within the *Sefirah Tiferet*," that is to say manifesting itself through this *Sefirah* without being identical with it. The two main points of this doctrine, which was of crucial importance in the later development of *Shabbateanism*, were:

(1) The distinction between the first cause and the God of Israel, implying—and this thesis was upheld in different versions by the radicals in the movement—that the first cause has no providence over creation, which is exercised only by the God of Israel who came into being only after the act of *zimzum*: this doctrine aroused particular revulsion in the Orthodox camp and was considered highly dangerous and heretical.

(2) The distinctly Gnostic character of the division, though with the difference that the religious evaluation of the two elements in this dualism is reversed: the second-century Gnostics thought of the hidden God as the true God, considering the "God of the Jews" as an inferior and even detestable being. Shabbetai Zevi, Nathan, and Cardozo, however, turned the order of values upside down: the God of Israel, although emanated from the first cause, was the true God of religion, whereas the first cause was essentially irrelevant from the religious point of view. Some time before his death Shabbetai Zevi dictated a longer version of this doctrine to one of his scholarly visitors, or at least induced him to write it down. This text, later known as *Raza di-Meheimanuta* ("The Mystery of the True Faith"), instituted a kind of kabbalistic trinity, called in zoharic terms the "three bonds of the faith." It consisted of The Ancient Holy One (*Attika kaddisha*), The Holy King (*Malka kaddisha*), also called The God of Israel, and his *Shekhinah*. No reference was made to the Messiah and his rank, or to his relation to these hypostases. This doctrine differed considerably from the system developed earlier by Nathan of Gaza in his *Sefer Beri'ah* ("Book of Creation"). Both texts had a profound influence on subsequent *Shabbatean* doctrine and their echoes are audible in the hymns sung by the later sectarians in Salonika which are extant.

A number of letters from Shabbetai Zevi's last years testify to his continuing belief in himself, at least during his periods of illumination. His last letter, written about six weeks before his death, asks his friends in the nearby Jewish community of Berat in Albania to send him a prayer book for the New Year and the Day of Atonement. He died quite suddenly two months after his 50th birthday, on the Day of Atonement, Sept. 17, 1676. Nathan propagated the idea that Shabbetai Zevi's death was merely an "occultation" and he had actually ascended to and been absorbed into the "supernal lights." Such a theory of apotheosis was in line with Nathan's earlier speculations on the gradual deification of the Messiah, but left open the question of who would then represent the Messiah on earth. Nathan himself died shortly after, on Jan. 11, 1680, in Skoplje in Macedonia. During the preceding year one of his disciples, Israel Hazzan of Kastoria, wrote long homilies on some psalms reflecting the state of mind of the circle closest to Shabbetai Zevi and the gradual construction of a heretical and sectarian doctrine.

The Shabbatean Kabbalah

As Shabbetai Zevi himself was not a systematic thinker and spoke mainly in hints and metaphors, Nathan of Gaza must be considered the main creator of a rather elaborate system which combined a new version of Lurianic Kabbalah with original ideas about the position of the Messiah in this new order. His ideas gained wide currency and their influence can be detected in many seemingly orthodox kabbalistic tracts in the next two generations.

Nathan accepts the Lurianic doctrine of *zimzum* (see Kabbalah) but adds a new, even deeper layer to his conception of the Godhead. From the beginning there are in *Ein-Sof* two kinds of light or aspects—which could even be called "attributes" in Spinoza's sense—the "thoughtful light" and "the thoughtless light." The first comprises all that is focused on the purpose of creation. But in the infinite wealth of *Ein-Sof* there are forces or principles which are not aimed at creation and whose sole purpose is to remain what they are and stay where they are. They are "thoughtless" in the sense that they are devoid of any idea directed to creation. The act of *zimzum*, which occurred in order to bring about a cosmos, took place only within the "thoughtful light." By this act the possibility was created for the thoughtful light to realize its thought, to project it into the primordial space, the *tehiru*, and there to erect the structures of creation. But when this light withdrew, there remained in the *tehiru* the thoughtless light, which had taken no part in creation and, by its very nature, resisted all creative change. In the dialectics of creation, it therefore became a positively hostile and destructive power. What is called the power of evil, the *kelippah*, is in the last resort rooted in this noncreative light in God himself. The duality of form and matter takes on a new aspect: both are grounded in *Ein-Sof*. The thoughtless light is not evil in itself but takes on this aspect because it is opposed to the existence of anything but *Ein-Sof* and therefore is set on destroying the structures produced by the thoughtful light. The *tehiru* which is filled with the thoughtless light, mingled with some residue of the thoughtful light which remained even after *zimzum*, is called *golem*, the formless primordial matter. The whole process of creation proceeds therefore through a dialectic between the two lights; in other words, through a dialectic rooted in the very being of *Ein-Sof*.

When, after *zimzum*, the thoughtful light was streaming back in a straight line (*kav ha-yosher*) into the *tehiru*, starting there processes which are very similar to those described in Lurianic Kabbalah, it penetrated only the upper half of the primordial space, as it were overwhelming the thoughtless light and transforming it, thereby building the world of its original thought. But it did not reach the lower half of the *tehiru*, described as "the deep of the great abyss." All the statements of Lurianic ontology and the doctrine of cosmic restoration or *tikkun* which Israel must achieve through the strength of the Torah relate to the upper part of the *tehiru* only. The lower part persists in its unreconstructed and formless condition until the advent of the Messiah, who alone can perfect it, bringing about its penetration and transformation by the thoughtful light. In fact, the thoughtless lights, too, build structures of their own—the demonic worlds of the *kelippot* whose sole intent is to destroy what the thoughtful light has wrought. These forces are called the "serpents dwelling in the great abyss." The satanic powers, called in the Zohar *sitra ahra* ("the other side"), are none other than the other side of *Ein-Sof* itself insofar as, by its very resistance, it became involved in the process of creation itself. Nathan developed a novel theory about processes which took place in the *tehiru* even before the ray from *Ein-Sof* penetrated there, being brought about by the interaction between the residue of the thoughtful light and the forces of the *golem*.

They produced modes of being connected with the first configurations of the letters which were to form the Torah and the cosmic script. Only at a later stage, after the straight line shone forth and penetrated the *tehiru*, were these first structures, called the work of primeval creation (*ma'aseh bereshit*), transformed into the more substantial structures (*ma'aseh merkavah*). All the Lurianic processes connected with the breaking of the vessels and the *tikkun* were now adapted to the dialectics of the two lights.

In this conception of creation the figure of the Messiah plays a central role from the outset. Since *zimzum* the soul of the Messiah had been submerged in the lower half of the *tehiru*; that is, since the beginning of time it stayed in the realm of the *kelippot*, being one of those sparks of the thoughtful light that had remained in the *tehiru* or perhaps having been snatched in some way by the *kelippot*. This soul, invaded by the influx of the thoughtless light and in bondage to its domination, has been struggling since the beginning of the world amid indescribable suffering to free itself and set out on its great task: to open up the lower part of the *tehiru* to the penetration of the thoughtful light and to bring redemption and *tikkun* to the *kelippot*. With their final transformation a utopian equilibrium and unity would be produced between the two aspects of *Ein-Sof*. The "straight line" cannot go forth into the abyss before the Messiah has succeeded in escaping from the domination of the *kelippot*. He is essentially different from all those souls which play their part in the processes of *tikkun*. In fact, he was never under the authority of the Torah, which is the mystical instrument used by the power of the thoughtful light and the souls connected with it. He represents something utterly new, an authority which is not subject to the laws binding in the state of cosmic and historic exile. He cannot be measured by common concepts of good and evil and must act according to his own law, which may become the utopian law of a world redeemed. Both his prehistory and his special task explain his behavior after he had freed himself from the prison of the *kelippah*.

This doctrine enabled Nathan to defend each and every "strange act" of the Messiah, including his apostasy and his antinomian outbreaks. He is the mystical counterpart of the red heifer (Num. 19): he purifies the unclean but in the process becomes as it were impure himself. He is the "holy serpent" which subdues the serpents of the abyss, the numerical value of the Hebrew word *mashi'ah* being equal to that of *nahash*. In a way, every soul is composed of the two lights and by its nature bound predominantly to the thoughtless light which aims at destruction, and the struggle between the two lights is repeated over and over again in every soul. But the holy souls are helped by the law of the Torah, whereas the Messiah is left completely to his own devices. These ideas were developed in the new heretic Kabbalah in great detail and in different versions, disclosing an uncanny sense for formulating paradoxical tenets of belief. They responded precisely to the particular situation of those who believed in the mission of an apostate Messiah, and the considerable dialectical force with which they were presented did not fail to impress susceptible minds. The combination of mythological images and dialectical argument added to the attraction exercised by Nathan's writings.

The Shabbatean Movement, 1680–1700

Outside the circles of the believers Shabbetai Zevi's death went unnoticed by the Jewish world. Among the believers it produced much soul-searching; some of his followers seem to have left the camp immediately after his death. Even his brother Elijah, who had joined him in Adrianople and had converted to Islam, returned to Smyrna and Judaism. The activities of the Shabbatean groups were mainly centered in three countries, Turkey, Italy, and Poland (particularly Lithuania), where vigorous leaders and various prophets and claimants to the succession to Shabbetai Zevi appeared. Though there were many believers in other parts of the Diaspora, such as Kurdistan and Morocco, these three centers were the most important. The largest groups in Turkey were in Salonika, Smyrna, and Constantinople but in most of the Balkan communities Shabbateanism survived and not infrequently members of the rabbinical courts were secret adherents. In Constantinople, their head was Abraham Yakhini, who died in 1682. A group of rabbis and kabbalists encouraged the more unlettered believers in Smyrna, although the Orthodox regained control there as in most places. From 1674 to 1680 Cardozo occupied the leading place among the Shabbateans in Smyrna after he had been forced to leave Tripoli around 1673, and later also Tunis and Leghorn. In Smyrna he found many followers, the most important of whom were the young rabbi Elijah b. Solomon Abraham ha-Kohen Ittamari (d. 1727), who became one of the most prolific writers and moral preachers of the next two generations and never seems to have abandoned his basic convictions, and the cantor Daniel b. Israel Bonafoux, who claimed the powers of a medium, especially in his later years.

During these years Cardozo began a prolific literary output, composing numerous lesser and larger books and tracts in which he expounded his own brand of Shabbatean theology. Beginning with *Boker Avraham* (1672), he propagated the theory that there is a difference of principle between the first cause, which is the God of the philosophers and the pagans, and the God of Israel who revealed himself to the Patriarchs and to the people of Israel. The confusion between the two is Israel's main failure in the era of exile. The people were particularly misled by the philosophers of Judaism, Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, and all the others. Only the teachers of the Talmud and the kabbalists had kept the flame of the true religion secretly burning. With the approach of redemption, a few elect souls would grasp the true meaning of Israel's belief, that is to say, revelation as against philosophy, and the Messiah (as prophesied by a midrashic saying) would reach the knowledge of the true God, Shabbetai Zevi's "mystery of the Godhead," by his own rational efforts. In the meantime, this paradoxical view could be supported by a true interpretation of traditional texts even though the blind rabbis thought it heresy. Cardozo made no use of the novel ideas of Nathan's Kabbalah but constructed a system of his own which had considerable dialectical power. In most of his writings he avoided the question of Shabbetai Zevi's mission, though he defended it in several epistles written at different periods of his life. For a considerable number of years, at least, he saw himself as the Messiah b. Joseph who, as revealer of the true faith and sufferer of persecution by the rabbis, must precede the final advent of Shabbetai Zevi, after which all the paradoxes of Shabbatean belief would be resolved. Between 1680 and 1697 Cardozo lived in Constantinople, Rodosto, and Adrianople, not only arousing much controversy by his teachings but also causing great unrest through his prophecies about the imminent messianic end, especially in 1682. He was finally forced to leave these parts and spent the last years of his life mainly in Candia (Crete), Chios, and, after vainly trying to settle in Jerusalem, in Egypt. The outstanding supporter of strict adherence to rabbinic tradition in practice as long as Shabbetai Zevi had not yet returned, he consistently battled against antinomian tendencies, although he too foresaw a

complete change in the manifestation of the Torah and its practice in the time of redemption. Cardozo's influence was second only to Nathan's; his writings were copied in many countries and he maintained close relations with Shabbatean leaders everywhere. Many of his polemics were directed against Samuel Primo on the one hand, and the radical Shabbateans of Salonika on the other. Primo (d. 1708), who later became chief rabbi of Adrianople, opposed any outward Shabbatean activity and disclosed his steadfast belief and heretical ideas only in secret conclaves.

In Salonika the situation was different. The number of believers was still quite large and the family of Shabbetai Zevi's last wife, led by her father, Joseph Filosof, and her brother Jacob Querido, displayed their convictions quite openly. Nathan had important followers among the rabbis, including some highly respected preachers and even halakhic authorities. The continuing state of turmoil, especially after Nathan's death, produced a fresh wave of excitement and new revelations. Visions of Shabbetai Zevi were very common in many circles of the believers but here, in 1683, they led to the mass apostasy of about 300 families who considered it their duty to follow in the Messiah's footsteps, in contradistinction to those Shabbateans who maintained, like Cardozo, that it was of the essence of the Messiah that his acts could not be imitated or followed by anyone else. Along with the first apostates among Shabbetai Zevi's contemporaries, the new group, led by Filosof and Solomon Florentin, formed the sect of the Doenmeh, voluntary Marranos, who professed and practiced Islam in public but adhered to a mixture of traditional and heretical Judaism in secret. Marrying only among themselves, they were soon identified as a separate group by both Turks and Jews and developed along their own lines, forming three subsects. A certain amount of antinomianism was common to all their groups, but this tendency was given preeminence by the subject under the leadership of Baruchiah Russo (Osman Baba) who, in the first years of the 18th century, created another schism by teaching that the new spiritual or messianic Torah (*Torah de-Azilut*) entailed a complete reversal of values, symbolized by the change of the 36 prohibitions of the Torah called *keritot* (meaning punishable by uprooting the soul and annihilating it) into positive commands. This included all the prohibited sexual unions and incest. It seems that this group also developed the doctrine of the divinity of Shabbetai Zevi and later of Baruchiah himself, who died in 1721. This doctrine of incarnation was later wrongly ascribed to all Shabbateans and created much confusion in the reports about them. Baruchiah's group became the most radical wing of the Shabbatean underground. Most of the believers, however, did not follow the example of the Doenmeh and stayed within the Jewish fold, even in Salonika, where they disappeared only after a considerable time. Several well known rabbis of Salonika and Smyrna in the 18th century such as Joseph b. David, Abraham Miranda, and Meir Bikayam, were still in secret sympathy with Shabbatean teachings and beliefs. Scholars who studied with Nathan or his pupils in Salonika, like Solomon Ayllon and Elijah Mojajon, who later became rabbis of important communities such as Amsterdam, London, and Ancona, spread the teachings of the moderate wing of Shabbateanism which adhered to Judaism and even tended to excessive pietism. Between 1680 and 1740 a considerable number of the emissaries from Palestine, especially from Hebron and Safed, were "tainted" with Shabbateanism and apparently also served as links between the various groups of believers in the Diaspora.

The second center existed in Italy, first in Leghorn, where Moses Pinheiro, Meir Rofe, Samuel de Paz, and Judah Sharaf (at the end of his life) were active, and later in Modena. Abraham Rovigo in Modena was passionately devoted to Shabbateanism of a distinctly pietistic character and, being a widely reputed scholar and kabbalist as well as a member of a very rich family, became the man to whom all "believers" turned, particularly visitors passing through Italy from the Land of Israel, Poland, and the Balkans. His convictions were shared by his intimate friend Benjamin b. Eliezer ha-Kohen, the rabbi of Reggio, Hayyim SegrM of Vercelli, and others. They watched for every sign of a new impulse and reported to each other the news they received from their visitors and correspondents. Revelations of heavenly *maggidim*, who confirmed Shabbetai Zevi's supernal rank and the legitimacy of his mission and also added new interpretations of the Zohar and other kabbalistic matters, were then common. Rovigo's papers, many of which have survived, show the wide distribution of Shabbatean propaganda between 1680 and 1700. Benjamin Kohen—a rabbi who displayed a portrait of Shabbetai Zevi in his house!—even dared to publish a commentary on Lamentations which took up in detail Nathan's aphorism that in the messianic era this biblical book would be read as a collection of hymns of joy (*Allon Bakhut*, Venice, 1712). Baruch of Arezzo, one of Rovigo's group, composed in 1682–85, probably in Modena, a hagiography of Shabbetai Zevi, *Zikhron le-Veit Yisrael*, the oldest biography of this kind that has survived. Nathan's writings were copied and ardently studied in these circles, and illuminates who claimed heavenly inspiration such as Issachar Baer Perlhefter and Mordecai (Mokhi'ah) Eisenstadt from Prague (between 1677 and 1681), and later (1696–1701) Mordecai Ashkenazi from Zholkva (Zolkiev), were received with open arms and supported by Rovigo. When Rovigo realized his plan for settling in Jerusalem in 1701, the majority of the members of the yeshivah he founded there consisted of Shabbateans. Before leaving Europe, Rovigo went with his disciple Mordecai Ashkenazi to Fuerth, where he saw through press a voluminous folio, *Eshel Avraham*, written by the latter and based on the new reading of the Zohar he had received from heaven. Being devoted followers of rabbinic tradition, people of Rovigo's brand of Shabbateanism deviated from halakhic practice only by secretly celebrating the Ninth of Av as a festival. Even this practice was sometimes abandoned. In general, outside the rather small circle of the Doenmeh, the followers of Shabbetai Zevi did not differ from other Jews in their positive attitude to halakhic practice, and the differences between them and "orthodoxy" remained in the realm of theological speculation. The latter, of course, no doubt had far-reaching implications for the Jewish consciousness of the believers which cannot be underrated. The question of the position of the Torah in the messianic age, which was already the object of serious discussion in Shabbetai Zevi's own circle and in Cardozo's writings, especially in his *Magen Avraham* (1668), could not remain an abstract one. But there is no indication that before 1700 heretic practices, as opposed to ideas, were characteristic of Shabbateanism.

This also holds true of the movement in Ashkenazi Jewry. Almost immediately after Shabbetai Zevi's death it was speculated whether he may have been the suffering Messiah b. Joseph rather than the final redeemer. Taking this position in Prague in 1677 was Mordecai Eisenstadt, an ascetic preacher who attracted a large following during the next five years. Together with his brother, who was probably the later famous rabbi Meir Eisenstadt, he traveled through Bohemia, southern Germany, and northern Italy, exhorting the people not to lose faith in the forthcoming redemption. Learned rabbis like Baer Perlhefter supported his

claims although Baer later left his camp and perhaps Shabbateanism altogether. Even where Shabbetai Zevi was revered as the true Messiah, as was the case in most groups, there was no lack of claimants for the role of the Messiah b. Joseph who would fill the interregnum between the "first manifestation" of Shabbetai Zevi and his second. Even during the latter's exile in Albania, such a claimant had already appeared in the person of Joseph ibn Zur in Meknes (Morocco), an ignoramus turned prophet who threw many communities into great agitation by proclaiming the final redemption for Passover 1675. His sudden death put an end to the upheaval, but not to the deep-rooted belief in Shabbetai Zevi in Morocco. More lasting was the impression created by another prophet of this type in Vilna, the former silversmith Joshua Heshel b. Joseph, generally called Heshel Zoref (1663–1700). Originally an unlettered craftsman, he became "reborn" during the great upheaval of 1666 and for many years was considered the outstanding prophet of the Shabbatean movement in Poland. Over a period of more than 30 years he composed the *Sefer ha-Zoref*, divided into five parts and said to represent something like the future Torah of the Messiah. In fact, its thousands of pages, based on mystical and numerological explanations of *Shema Yisrael*, proclaimed him as Messiah b. Joseph and Shabbetai Zevi as Messiah b. David. Its attitude toward rabbinical tradition remains completely conservative. Several parts of these revelations are preserved; some of them, curiously enough, came into the hands of Israel b. Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov and were held in high esteem by him and his circle. In his last years Heshel Zoref moved to Cracow and encouraged the new movement of the Shabbatean Hasidim.

Another prophet of this type, a former brandy distiller called Zadok, appeared in 1694–96 in Grodno. The stir such men created reverberated as far as Italy, and Rovigo and his friends carefully collected testimonies about these events from Polish visitors. One of these was the Polish Shabbatean Hayyim b. Solomon from Kalisz, known as Hayyim Malakh, a very learned man and apparently a powerful personality. In 1691 he studied in Italy those of Nathan's writings which had not yet become available in Poland, and after his return propagated their teachings among the rabbis of Poland. Later he went to Adrianople and, under the influence of Primo, left the moderates and became a spokesman for a more radical branch of the movement. He joined forces with Judah Hasid from Shidlov, a famous preacher of repentance and a leader of the moderates. Between 1696 and 1700 they became the moving spirits of the "holy society of Rabbi Judah Hasid," a group composed of many hundreds of people, most of them probably Shabbateans, who indulged in extreme ascetism and prepared to emigrate to Palestine, there to await Shabbetai Zevi's second manifestation. Groups of them passed through many communities in Poland and Germany, arousing great enthusiasm. Although they never declared themselves openly as Shabbateans, little doubt remains on this score. Several rabbis in large communities who were aware of the true character of these Hasidim unsuccessfully tried to stop the propaganda. At the end of 1698, a council of the Shabbatean leaders of the Hasidim was held in Mikulov (Nikolsburg; Moravia) and was also attended by Heshel Zoref.

Shabbateanism in the 18th Century and its Disintegration

The *aliyah* of the Hasidim to Jerusalem in 1700 represented a peak of Shabbatean activity and expectations, and in the great disappointment of its failure, as after the earlier failure of Shabbetai Zevi, several followers embraced Christianity or Islam. Judah Hasid died almost immediately after his arrival in Jerusalem in October 1700, and conditions in Jerusalem shattered the movement. Dissension broke out between the moderates, some of whom seem to have buried their Shabbatean convictions altogether, and the more radical elements led by Malakh. He and his faction were expelled but even the moderates could not maintain their foothold in the Holy Land and most of them returned to Germany, Austria, or Poland. One influential Shabbatean who remained was Jacob Wilna, a kabbalist of great renown. Many believers had proclaimed 1706 as the year of Shabbetai Zevi's return and the disappointment weakened a movement that had lost its active drive. It was driven completely underground, a process hastened by the spreading rumors of the extremist antinomian and nihilist teachings of Baruchiah. Increasingly, although wrongly, Shabbateans were identified with this extreme wing whose followers were not satisfied with mystical theories and visionary experience, but drew consequences in their personal adherence to the Law. Malakh went to Salonika, then spread the gospel of secret antinomianism in Podolia, where he found fertile ground especially in the smaller communities. There is insufficient information regarding other parts of Europe to allow a clear differentiation between the various factions in the underground movement. It is obvious, however, that the antinomian slogan propagated by the radical wing that "the nullification of the Torah was its true fulfillment," and that, like the grain that dies in the earth, the deeds of man must become in some way "rotten" in order to bring forth the fruit of redemption, had a strong emotional appeal even to some talmudists and kabbalists, though, essentially, it represented an antirabbinic revolt in Judaism. That it alarmed the rabbinic authorities, who considered the children of these sectarians as bastards and therefore no longer admissible to the fold, was only logical. On the other hand, there is evidence that not a few of the most influential moral preachers and authors of moral literature of a radical ascetic bent were secret Shabbateans of the moderate and hasidic wing. Many of the most influential "*musar-books*" of this period belong to this category, such as *Shevet Musar* by Elijah Kohen Itamari (1712), *Tohorat ha-Kodesh* by an anonymous author writing in the first decade of the century (1717), and *Shem Ya'akov* by Jacob Segal of Zlatova (1716). Some kabbalists who also wrote moral tracts in Yiddish belonged to this camp, such as Zevi Hirsch b. Jerahmeel Chotsh, and Jehiel Michael Epstein.

Shabbatean propaganda thus polarized around two different centers. The moderates who conformed to traditional practice and even overdid it could produce a literature which, avoiding an open declaration of their messianic faith, reached a wide public unaware of the convictions of the authors. Not a few homiletical, moral, kabbalistic, and liturgical books were published whose authors hinted in devious ways at their secret belief. The radicals, who became particularly active between 1715 and 1725 after Baruchiah had been proclaimed as "Santo Senor" and an incarnation of the Shabbatean version of the "God of Israel," had to be more careful. They worked through emissaries from Salonika and Podolia and circulated manuscripts and letters expounding their "new Kabbalah." The circles in Poland known as Hasidim before the advent of Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, which practiced extreme forms of ascetic piety, contained a strong element of Shabbateanism, especially in Podolia. In Moravia Judah b. Jacob, commonly called Loebele Prossnitz, caused considerable upheaval after his "awakening" as a Shabbatean prophet, traveling through the

communities of Moravia and Silesia and finding many followers, some of whom persisted even after his fraudulent "magical" practices were unmasked and he was put under a ban (1703–06). Meir Eisenstadt who, like a number of other outstanding rabbis, had been in sympathy with the movement and was then officiating at Prossnitz left him and turned against him; but Prossnitz remained the seat of a sizable Shabbatean group throughout the 18th century. A little later, 1708–25, another center of Shabbateanism crystallized in Mannheim, where some members of Judah Hasid's society, including his son-in-law Isaiah Hasid from Zbarazh, found refuge in the newly established *bet ha-midrash*. About the same time Elijah Taragon, one of Cardozo's pupils, made an unsuccessful attempt to publish his master's *Boker Avraham* in Amsterdam (1712).

While all these developments took place mainly in a twilight atmosphere or underground and received little general attention, a great public scandal broke out when another *Shabbatean* illuminate, this time a very learned one, succeeded in publishing the only large text of Shabbatean theology printed in the 18th century. Nehemiah Hiyya Hayon from Sarajevo had been educated in Jerusalem, served as a rabbi in his home town, and was in contact with the sectarians in Salonika and with Cardozo's circle before he returned to *Erez Israel*. There he composed a highly elaborate double commentary on *Raza di-Meheimanuta*, Shabbetai Zevi's last exposition of the mystery of the Godhead, which Hayon now claimed to have received from an angel or, on other occasions, to have found in a copy of the *Zohar*. Forced to leave Erez Israel because of his Shabbatean activities, he stayed for several years in Turkey, where he made enemies and friends alike and, about 1710, arrived in Venice, either on his own initiative or as an emissary. With the support of some secret sympathizers, but in general posing as an orthodox kabbalist, he succeeded in obtaining the approbation of rabbinical authorities to publish his three books: *Raza di-Yhuda* (Venice, 1711), *Oz le-Elohim* (Berlin, 1713) and *Divrei Nehemyah* (*ibid.*, 1713). Of these *Oz le-Elohim* was the main work, containing his aforementioned commentaries on Shabbetai Zevi's text, whose title he changed to *Meheimanuta de-Kholla*. Amid polemics against Cardozo, he expounded his own version of the doctrine regarding the "three bonds of faith," the Shabbatean trinity of *Ein-Sof*, the God of Israel, and the *Shekhinah*. He carefully avoided linking this in any way with Shabbetai Zevi, whose name is never mentioned in any of these books, although *Divrei Nehemyah* contains an extremely ambiguous homily attacking and at the same time defending those who apostatized for the sake of the God of Israel, that is the Doenmeh. It was only when he came to Amsterdam at the end of 1713, where he enjoyed the protection of Solomon Ayllon, himself a former secret adherent of Shabbateanism, that the heretical character of his books and especially of *Oz le-Elohim* was recognized by Zevi Hirsch Ashkenazi, the rabbi of the Ashkenazi community in Amsterdam. In the ensuing violent quarrel between the Amsterdam *Sephardi* and Ashkenazi rabbis, which produced a lively polemical literature, Shabbatean theology was for the first time discussed in public, being attacked by rabbis like David Nieto, Joseph Ergas, and Moses Hagiz, and a host of other participants in the fight against the heresy. Hayon vigorously defended his "kabbalistic" doctrine, stoutly but vainly denying its Shabbatean character. About 120 letters concerning this controversy were published in various sources. Several rabbis who were suspected of secret Shabbateanism refused to join in the bans pronounced against Hayon who, by the end of 1715, was forced to leave Europe. In his attempt at vindication by the rabbis of Turkey he received only halfhearted support.

When he returned to Europe in 1725, his arrival coincided with another *Shabbatean* scandal and brought his efforts to naught. This latter upheaval was connected with the increasing propaganda of the extremist followers of Baruchiah who had gained a strong foothold in Podolia, Moravia, and especially in the yeshivah of Prague, where the young and already famous Jonathan Eybeschuetz was widely considered their most important supporter. From 1724 onward several manuscripts were circulated from Prague which contained kabbalistic explanations couched in ambiguous and obscure language but whose gist was a defense of the doctrine of the "God of Israel," his indwelling in *Tiferet*, and his intimate connection with the Messiah, without explicitly mentioning, however, his character as a divine incarnation. The testimony pointing to Eybeschuetz as the author, particularly of the kabbalistic but doubtless heretical manuscript *Va-Avo ha-Yom el ha-Ayin*, is overwhelming. When this and many other Shabbatean writings from Baruchiah's sect were discovered, in Frankfurt in 1725, among the luggage of Moses Meir of Kamenka (Kamionka), a Shabbatean emissary to Mannheim from Podolia, a great scandal ensued. A whole network of propaganda and connections between the several groups was uncovered, but Eybeschuetz' considerable reputation as a genius in rabbinic learning prevented action against him, particularly as he placed himself at the head of those who publicly condemned Shabbetai Zevi and its sectarians in a proclamation of excommunication dated Sept. 16, 1725. In many other Polish, German, and Austrian communities similar proclamations were published in print, also demanding that all who heard them should denounce secret Shabbateans to the rabbinical authorities. The atmosphere of persecution which then prevailed led the remaining Shabbateans to go completely underground for the next 30 years, especially in Poland.

After these events the figure of Jonathan Eybeschuetz remained in twilight, and indeed he poses a difficult psychological problem if (as may be evidenced through a study of the pertinent texts and documents) he must in fact be considered the author of the aforementioned manuscript. When, after his glorious career as a great teacher, preacher, and rabbinic authority in Prague, Metz, and Hamburg, it was discovered in 1751 that a considerable number of amulets he had given in Metz and Hamburg/Altona were in fact of a *Shabbatean* character, another great uproar followed, engulfing many people in Germany, Austria, and Poland in a heated controversy. His main opponent was Jacob Emden, the son of Hayon's foe in Amsterdam and an indefatigable fighter against all surviving Shabbatean groups and personalities. His many polemical writings published between 1752 and 1769 often widely overshot their mark, as in the case of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, but they contain much valuable information about Shabbateanism in the 18th century. Eybeschuetz' defense of the amulets was particularly weak and largely self-defeating. He argued that the text of the amulets consisted only of mystical Holy Names which had their root in kabbalistic books and could not be deciphered as a continuous text. Comparison of the amulets, however, proves the contrary. The cryptograms used differed from one item to the other, but they always contained an assertion of the messianic mission of Shabbetai Zevi and a reference to Shabbatean views on the "God of Israel."

The secret Shabbateans in central Europe saw Eybeschuetz as their most prominent figure, whereas the orthodox were deeply

shocked by the possibility that an outstanding representative of rabbinic and kabbalistic spirituality might have leanings toward heretical ideas. Many of them refused to entertain such a possibility and stood by him. The confusion even in the camp of orthodox kabbalists was considerable and they, too, were divided. The issue under discussion was greatly complicated by personal and irrelevant factors, but the conflict demonstrated how deeply rooted were apprehensions regarding the entrenchment of the Shabbateans in many communities. This is also borne out by numerous testimonies from many sources recorded between 1708 and 1750, even before the controversy between Eybeschuetz and Emden took place. Nathan of Gaza's writings were still studied not only in Turkey, but in Morocco, Italy, and among the Ashkenazim. Several authors describe the method of Shabbatean propaganda among those who had only a modest talmudic learning or none at all but were drawn to the study of *aggadah* which the sectarians knew how to use and explain along their own lines. This method of attracting people and then slowly initiating them into the tenets of the sectarians was persistently used for over more than 80 years in Poland, Moravia, Bohemia, and Germany. Much ambiguity was permitted by the widespread heretical principle that the true believer must not appear to be what he really was and that dissimulation was legitimate in a period where redemption had taken place in the secret heart of the world but not yet in the realm of nature and history. People were allowed to deny their true belief in public in order to conceal their conservation of the "holy faith." This went so far that a work presenting a summary of Shabbatean theology, like Jacob Koppel Lifshitz' "Gates of Paradise," written in the early years of the 18th century in Volhynia, was preceded by a preface vehemently denouncing the Shabbatean heresy! This double-faced behavior came to be seen as a characteristic trait of the sectarians who, from the beginning of the 18th century, became known in Yiddish as *Shebsel* or *Shabsazviniks*, with the connotation of "hypocrites." There is full proof that a fair number of men of great talmudic learning, and even officiating rabbis, joined these groups and found it possible to live in a state of high tension between outward orthodoxy and inward antinomianism that perforce destroyed the unity of their Jewish identity. In places like Prague a number of highly respected families formed a nucleus of secret believers, and there is evidence that in some places influential Court Jews protected the sectarians or belonged to them. Many of the Moravian Shabbateans held positions of economic power. There is also evidence about the secret rituals performed in these groups, especially in Podolia, where the followers of Baruchiah were concentrated in places such as Buchach, Busk, Gliniany, Gorodenka, Zolkiew, Nadvornaya, Podgaitsy (Podhajce), Rogatin (Rohatyn), and Satanov. The eating of forbidden fat (*helev*) or severe transgressions of sexual prohibitions were considered as initiation rites. Kabbalists and *Ba'alei Shem* (see *Ba'al Shem*) from Podhajce who became known in Germany and England between 1748 and 1780, such as Samuel Jacob Hayyim Falk, the "Ba'al Shem of London," and Moses David Podheizer, a close associate of Eybeschuetz in Hamburg, came from these circles.

The heated controversy about the revelations of Moses Hayyim Luzzatto in Padua, which began in 1727, and the messianic tendencies of his group engaged much attention in the following ten years. Although even in their secret writings Luzzatto, Moses David Valle, and their companions repudiated the claims of Shabbetai Zevi and his followers, they were without doubt deeply influenced by some of the paradoxical teachings of Shabbatean Kabbalah, especially those concerning the metaphysical prehistory of the Messiah's soul in the realm of the *kelippot*. Luzzatto formulated these ideas in a manner which removed the obviously heretical elements but still reflected, even in his polemics against the Shabbateans, much of their spiritual universe. He even tried to find a place for Shabbetai Zevi, though not a messianic one, in his scheme of things. The idea of an apostate Messiah was utterly unacceptable to him as were the antinomian consequences drawn by the Doenmeh and their sympathizers, but his claims to heavenly inspiration and novel kabbalistic revelations, coming as they did immediately after the excommunication of the sectarians in 1725 and 1726, aroused grave apprehensions in Italy and some places in Germany that had special experiences with Shabbateanism. Similarly, a generation later the first antagonists of latter-day Polish Hasidism suspected it to be nothing but a new branch of Shabbateanism. In both cases the suspicions were wrong but they had some foundation in the teaching and behavior of the newcomers. More complicated is the case of the voluminous work *Hemdut Yamim*, first published in Smyrna in 1731 and later several times in Zolkiew and twice in Italy. This anonymous work described in detail Jewish life and ritual from the point of view of Lurianic Kabbalah but was permeated with the spirit of strictly ascetic Shabbateanism as it was promoted in Jerusalem and Smyrna by kabbalists like Jacob Wilna and Meir Bikayam. Adopting several Shabbatean innovations, it included even hymns written by Nathan of Gaza and a whole ritual for the eve of the new moon whose Shabbatean character is obvious. Though feigning an earlier origin, it was probably composed between 1710 and 1730, allegedly in Jerusalem but probably somewhere else. Its very attractive style and rich content secured it a wide public, and in Turkey it was accepted as a classic, a position it maintained. However, not long after its publication in Podolia in 1742, the work was denounced by Jacob Emden as composed by Nathan of Gaza (wrongly) and propagating Shabbatean views (rightly). This opposition notwithstanding, it was still frequently quoted but withdrawn from public circulation in Poland and Germany.

Independently of the Eybeschuetz affair, a momentous explosion of Shabbateanism in its last stage occurred in 1756 in Podolia with the appearance of Jacob Frank (1726–91) as the new leader of the extremist wing. Imbued with the main ideas of Baruchiah's sectarians in Salonika, he returned to his native milieu after spending many years mainly during his childhood and adolescence in Turkey. He was already then reputed as a new leader, prophet, and reincarnation of Shabbetai Zevi. (For details of the movement he instigated see Jacob Frank and the Frankists.) In the stormy years between 1756 and 1760 a large part of Frank's followers converted to Catholicism, constituting a kind of Doenmeh in Poland, only in Catholic disguise. These events and especially the willingness of the Frankists to serve the interests of the Catholic clergy by publicly defending the blood libel in the disputation at Lvov (1759) deeply stirred and aroused the Jewish community in Poland and had wide repercussions even outside Poland. The majority of the Shabbateans, even of Frank's own sectarians, did not follow him into the Church and groups of Frankists remained within the Jewish fold in Poland, Hungary, Moravia, Bohemia, and Germany. Frank's main contribution was threefold.

- (1) He divested Shabbateanism of its kabbalistic theology and the abstruse metaphysical speculations and terms in which it was clothed, substituting instead a much more popular and colorful version, couched in mythological images. The unknown and as yet inaccessible "Good God," the "Big Brother" (also called "He Who stands before

God"), and the matron or virgin or plain "she"—an amalgam of the *Shekhinah* and the Virgin Mary—constitute the Frankist trinity. Frank saw Shabbetai Zevi, Baruchiah, and finally himself as emissaries and somehow incarnations of the "Big Brother," whose mission would be completed by the appearance of an incarnation of the feminine element of this trinity. Frank's tendency to throw away the "old books" contrasted sharply with the continuous predilection of his followers to study them, especially those who remained Jews.

(2) His version of Shabbateanism took on an unabashedly nihilistic character. Under the "burden of silence" the true believer, who has God in his secret heart, should go through all religions, rites, and established orders without accepting any and indeed annihilating all from within and thereby establishing true freedom. Organized religion is only a cloak to be put on and be thrown away on the way to the "sacred knowledge," the gnosis of the place where all traditional values are destroyed in the stream of "life."

(3) He propagated this nihilistic religion as the "way to Esau" or "Edom," encouraging assimilation without really believing in it, hoping for a miraculous revival of a messianic and nihilistic Judaism through the birth pangs of a universal upheaval. This conception opened the way to an amalgamation between this last stage of Shabbatean messianism and mysticism on the one hand and contemporary enlightenment and secular and anticlerical tendencies on the other. Freemasonry, liberalism, and even Jacobinism could be seen as equally valuable means to such final ends. It is small wonder that wherever such groups existed the Jewish communities fought them vehemently even though only rather vague rumors of Frank's secret teachings reached them.

Frankists in central Europe joined forces with the older Shabbatean groups, including the admirers of Eybeschuetz, and some of Eybeschuetz' own sons and grandchildren joined the Frankist camp. In the 1760s there was still active Shabbatean propaganda in the yeshivot of Altona and Pressburg. An emissary, Aaron b. Moses Teomim from Gorodenka, propagated Shabbateanism in northern and southern Germany and, in 1767, tried to enlist the help of Christian sympathizers, claiming to have set out on his mission on behalf of the Polish prince Radziwill, a well-known protector of the Frankists. The Jewish and apostate Frankists remained in close touch, particularly through their meetings at Frank's "court" in Brno and later in Offenbach. Although they were deeply impressed by Frank's sayings and epistles, their own activities never equaled the ferocity of his subversive and nihilist visions. During the first decades of the 19th century Shabbateanism disintegrated even as a loosely organized sect and, apart from those who reverted to traditional Judaism, disappeared into the camp of Jewish liberalism and, in many cases, indifference. The sectarian groups of the Doenmeh in Turkey and the Catholic Frankists in Poland, especially in Warsaw, survived much longer, the former breaking up only in the mid-20th century and the latter probably after 1860.

[Gershom Scholem]

Also: Frankists; Jacob ben Judah Leib

FRANK, JACOB, AND THE FRANKISTS

Jacob Frank (1726–1791) was the founder of a Jewish sect named after him which comprised the last stage in the development of the Shabbatean movement. He was born Jacob b. Judah Leib in Korolowka (Korolevo), a small town in Podolia. His family was middle class, and his father was a contractor and merchant, apparently well respected. His grandfather lived for a time in Kalisz, and his mother came from Rzesow. Although Frank's claim before the Inquisition that his father used to serve as a rabbi appears to have no foundation there is reason to believe that he did conduct services in Czernowitz, where he moved in the early 1730s. His father is depicted as a scrupulously observant Jew. At the same time, it is very likely that he already had certain connections with the Shabbatean sect, which had taken root in many communities in Podolia, Bukovina, and Walachia. Frank was educated in Czernowitz and Sniatyn, and lived for several years in Bucharest. Although he went to *heder*, he gained no knowledge of Talmud, and in later years boasted of this ignorance and of the qualities he possessed as a *prostak* ("simple man"). His self-characterization as an ignoramus (*am ha-arez*) must be seen in the context of the contemporary usage of the word to mean a man who knows Bible and the *aggadah*, but who is not skilled in *Gemara*. In his memoirs he makes much of the pranks and bold adventures of his childhood and adolescence. In Bucharest he began to earn his living as a dealer in cloth, precious stones, and whatever came to hand. Between 1745 and 1755 his trade took him through the Balkans and as far as Smyrna.

Early Associations with the Shabbateans

Frank's accounts of his earliest associations with the Sabbateans are full of contradictions, but there is no doubt that these contacts go back to his youth. Apparently his teacher in Czernowitz belonged to the sect and had promised that Frank would be initiated into their faith after marriage, as was often customary among Shabbateans. He began to study the Zohar, making a name in Shabbatean circles as a man possessed of special powers and inspiration. When in 1752 he married Hannah, the daughter of a

respected Ashkenazi merchant in Nikopol (Bulgaria), two Shabbatean emissaries from Podolia were at the wedding. Shabbatean scholars like these, some of whom Frank mentions in his stories, accompanied him on his travels, and initiated him into the mysteries of "the faith." There is no doubt that these men were representatives of the extremist wing formed by the disciples of Barukhyah Russo (d. 1720), one of the leaders of the Doenmeh in Salonika. It was in the company of these teachers, themselves Ashkenazim, that Frank visited Salonika for the first time in 1753, and became involved with the Barukhyah group of the Doenmeh, but he followed the practice of the Polish disciples and did not convert to Islam. After his marriage it seems that trading became secondary to his role as a Shabbatean "prophet," and as part of his mission he journeyed to the grave of Nathan of Gaza, Adrianople, and Smyrna, and again spent a good deal of time in Salonika in 1755. Through their letters, his Shabbatean teachers and companions from Poland spread the news of the emergence of a new leader in Podolia, and finally persuaded him to return to his early home. Frank, who was a man of unbridled ambition, domineering to the point of despotism, had a low opinion of the contemporary Barukhyah sect in Salonika, calling it "an empty house"; whereas, as the leader of the Shabbateans in Poland, he envisaged a great future for himself. Although in the circle of his close friends he was given the Sephardi appellation *Hakham Ya'akov*, at the same time he was considered to be a new transmigration or a reincarnation of the divine soul which had previously resided in Shabbetai Zevi and Barukhyah, to whom Frank used to refer as the "First" and the "Second." At the end of the 18th century, the story that Frank had gone to Poland on an explicit mission from the Barukhyah sect was still circulating in Doenmeh sects in Salonika. In the first years of his activity he did in fact follow the basic principles of this sect, both its teaching and its customs.

Frank in Podolia

On Dec. 3, 1755, Frank, accompanied by R. Mordecai and R. Nahman, crossed the Dniester River and spent some time with his relatives in Korolewka. After this he passed in solemn state through the communities in Podolia which contained Shabbatean cells. He was enthusiastically received by "the believers," and in the general Jewish community the news spread of the appearance of a suspected *frenk*, which was the usual Yiddish term for a Sephardi. Frank, who had spent about 25 years in the Balkans and was thought to be a Turkish subject, actually conducted himself like a Sephardi and spoke Ladino when he appeared in public. Subsequently he assumed the appellation "Frank" as his family name. His appearance in Lanskrone (Landskron) at the end of January 1756 led to a great scandal, when he was discovered conducting a Shabbatean ritual with his followers in a locked house. The opponents of the Shabbateans claimed that they surprised the sectarians in the midst of a heretical religious orgy, similar to rites which were actually practiced by members of the Barukhyah sect, especially in Podolia. Later Frank claimed that he had deliberately opened the windows of the house in order to compel the "believers" to show themselves publicly instead of concealing their actions as they had done for decades. Frank's followers were imprisoned but he himself went scot-free because the local authorities believed him to be a Turkish citizen. At the request of the rabbis an enquiry was instituted at the *bet din* in Satanow, the seat of the Podolia district rabbinate, which examined the practices and principles of the Shabbateans. Frank crossed the Turkish frontier; returning once more to his followers, he was arrested in March 1756 in Kopyczynce (Kopichintsy) but was again allowed to go free. After this he remained for at least three years in Turkey, first in Khotin on the Dniester, and afterward mainly in Giorgievo on the Danube. There, early in 1757, he became officially a convert to Islam, and was greatly honored for this by the Turkish authorities. In June and August 1757 he made secret visits to Rogatyn, in Podolia, in order to confer with his followers. During this period, he went to Salonika a number of times, and also paid one visit to Constantinople.

When Frank appeared in Poland he became the central figure for the vast majority of the Shabbateans, particularly those in Galicia, the Ukraine, and Hungary. It would appear that most of the Moravian Shabbateans also acknowledged his leadership. An inquiry of the *bet din* in Satanow had to a large extent uncovered the Shabbatean network of Barukhyah's followers, which had existed underground in Podolia. A considerable portion of the Satanow findings was published by Jacob Emden. From this it is clear that the suspicions concerning the antinomian character of the sect were justified, and that "the believers," who conformed outwardly to Jewish legal precepts, did in fact transgress them, including the sexual prohibitions of the Torah, with the stated intention of upholding the higher form of the Torah, which they called *Torah de-azilut* ("the Torah of emanation"), meaning the spiritual Torah in contradistinction to the actual Torah of the *halakhah*, which was called the *Torah de-beri'ah* ("the Torah of creation"). The results of the inquiry were laid before a rabbinical assembly at Brody in June 1756, and confirmed at a session of the Council of the Four Lands held in Konstantynow in September. In Brody a *herem* ("excommunication") was proclaimed against the members of the sect, which laid them open to persecution and also sought to restrict study of the Zohar and Kabbalah before a certain age (40 years in the case of Isaac Luria's writings).

When printed and dispatched throughout the communities, the *herem* provoked a wave of persecution against the members of the sect, particularly in Podolia. The Polish rabbis turned to Jacob Emden, well-known as a fierce antagonist of the Shabbateans, who advised them to seek help from the Catholic ecclesiastical authorities based on the argument that the Shabbatean faith, being a mixture of the principles of all the other religions, constituted a new religion, and as such was forbidden by canon law. However, the results of his advice were the opposite of what had been intended, as Frank's followers, who had been severely harassed, adopted the strategy of putting themselves under the protection of Bishop Dembowski of Kamieniec-Podolski, in whose diocese many of the Shabbatean communities were concentrated. If before they had acted in a two-faced manner with regard to Judaism, appearing to be outwardly Orthodox while being secretly heretical, they now decided, apparently on Frank's advice, to emphasize and even to exaggerate what beliefs they held in common with the basic principles of Christianity, in order to curry favor with the Catholic priesthood, although in fact their secret Shabbatean faith had not changed at all. Proclaiming themselves "contra-talmudists," they sought the protection of the Church from their persecutors, who, they claimed, had been angered precisely because of the sympathy shown by "the believers" toward some of the important tenets of Christianity. This extremely successful maneuver enabled them to find refuge with the ecclesiastical authorities, who saw in them potential candidates for mass conversion from Judaism to Christianity. In the meantime, however, members of the sect were constantly being impelled

against their will by their protectors to assist in the preparation of anti-Jewish propaganda, and to formulate declarations which were intended to wreak destruction upon Polish Jewry. These developments strengthened mutual hostility and had dire consequences. Throughout these events Frank took great care not to draw attention to himself, except to appear as a spiritual guide showing his followers the way, as it were, to draw nearer to Christianity. It should be noted that the name "Frankists" was not used at this time, becoming current only in the 19th century. As far as the mass of Jews and rabbis were concerned there was no difference at all between the earlier Shabbateans and the Shabbateans in this new guise, and they continued to call them "the sect of Shabbetai Zevi." Even Frank's followers, when talking to one another, continued, to refer to themselves by the usual term *ma'aminim* ("believers").

Disputations

In the events that followed, it is difficult to differentiate precisely between the steps taken by Frank's adherents and those that were initiated by the Church and resulted from ecclesiastical coercion, although there is no doubt that M. Balaban (see bibliography) is right in laying greater stress on the latter. Shortly after the *herem* at Brody the Frankists asked Bishop Dembowski to hold a new enquiry into the Lanskroun affair, and they petitioned for a public disputation between themselves and the rabbis. On Aug. 2, 1756 they presented nine principles of their faith for debate. Formulated in a most ambiguous fashion, their declaration of faith asserted in brief:

- (1) belief in the Torah of Moses;
- (2) that the Torah and the Prophets were obscure books, which had to be interpreted with the aid of God's light from above, and not simply by the light of human intelligence;
- (3) that the interpretation of the Torah to be found in the Talmud contained nonsense and falsehood, hostile to the Torah of the Lord;
- (4) belief that God is one and that all the worlds were created by Him;
- (5) belief in the trinity of the three equal "faces" within the one God, without there being any division within Him;
- (6) that God manifested Himself in corporeal form, like other human beings, but without sin;
- (7) that Jerusalem would not be rebuilt until the end of time;
- (8) that Jews waited in vain for the Messiah to come and raise them above the whole world; and
- (9) that, instead, God would Himself be clothed in human form and atone for all the sins for which the world had been cursed, and that at His coming the world would be pardoned and cleansed of all iniquity.

These principles reflect the belief of the antinomian followers of Barukhyah, but they were formulated in such a way that they seemed to refer to Jesus of Nazareth instead of to Shabbetai Zevi and Barukhyah. They constitute a blatant plan to deceive the Church which the priests did not understand, and which, quite naturally, they were not interested in understanding.

The rabbis managed to avoid accepting the invitation to the disputation for nearly a year. However, after great pressure from the bishop, the disputation finally took place at Kamieniec, from June 20 to 28, 1757. Nineteen opponents of the Talmud (then called Zoharites) took part, together with a handful of rabbis from communities in the area. The spokesmen for the Shabbateans were also learned men, some of them being officiating rabbis who had secret Shabbatean tendencies. The arguments in the accusations and the defense of the rabbis were presented in writing, and were later published in a Latin protocol in Lvov in 1758. On Oct. 17, 1757, Bishop Dembowski issued his decision in favor of the Frankists, imposing a number of penalties upon the rabbis, chief of which was a condemnation of the Talmud as worthless and corrupt, with an order that it be burned in the city square. All Jewish homes were to be searched for copies of the Talmud. According to some contemporary accounts many cartloads of editions of the Talmud were in fact burned in Kamieniec, Lvov, Brody, Zolkiew, and other places. The "burning of the Torah" had a crushing effect on the Jewish community and the rabbis declared a fast in memory of the event. Jews who had influence with the authorities tried to stop the burnings, which took place mainly in November 1757.

A sudden reversal of fortune, in favor of the "talmudists" and to the detriment of the sectarians, resulted from the sudden death of Bishop Dembowski on November 9, at the very time of the burnings. News of the event, in which Jews saw the finger of God, spread like wildfire. Persecutions of the sect were renewed with even greater vehemence, and many of them fled across the Dniester to Turkey. There several converted to Islam, and one group even joined the Doenmeh in Salonika, where they were known as "the Poles." Meanwhile the spokesmen for the "contra-talmudists" turned to the political and ecclesiastical authorities and sought the implementation of the privilege which had been promised them by Dembowski, who allowed them to follow their own faith. They also sought the return of their looted property and permission for the refugees to come back to their homes. After some internal disagreements among the Polish authorities, King Augustus III issued a privilege on June 16, 1758, which accorded

the sectarians royal protection as men "who were near to the [Christian] acknowledgment of God." Most of the refugees returned to Podolia at the end of September, and gathered mainly in and around the small town of Iwanie (near Khotin). In December, or the beginning of January 1759, Frank himself also left Turkey and arrived in Iwanie. Many of "the believers" scattered throughout eastern Galicia were summoned there.

Iwanie

In fact, the Frankists constituted themselves as a special sect with a distinctive character only during those months when "the believers" lived in Iwanie, an episode which became engraved on their memory as a quasi-revelatory event. Here it was that Frank finally revealed himself as the living embodiment of God's power who had come to complete the mission of Shabbetai Zevi and Barukhyah, and as "the true Jacob," comparing himself to the patriarch Jacob who had completed the work of his predecessors Abraham and Isaac. It was here that he unfolded his teaching before his followers in short statements and parables, and introduced a specific order into the ritual of the sect. There is no doubt that it was here that he prepared them to face the necessity of adopting Christianity outwardly, in order to keep their true faith in secret, just as the Doenmeh had done with regard to Islam. He declared that all religions were only stages through which "the believers" had to pass—like a man putting on different suits of clothes—and then to discard as of no worth compared with the true hidden faith. Frank's originality at this time consisted in his brazen rejection of the Shabbatean theology which was well-known to "the believers" from the writings of Nathan of Gaza and from the writings which were based on the extreme Shabbatean Kabbalah in Barukhyah's version. He asked them to forget all this, proposing in its place a kind of mythology freed from all traces of kabbalistic terminology, although in fact it was no more than a popular and homiletical reworking of kabbalistic teaching. In place of the customary Shabbatean trinity of the "three knots of faith," i.e., *Artika Kaddisha*, *Malka Kaddisha*, and the *Shekhinah*, which are all united in the Divinity (see Shabbetai Zevi), Frank went so far as to say that the true and good God was hidden and divested of any link with creation, and particularly with this insignificant world. It is He who conceals Himself behind "the King of Kings," whom Frank also calls "the Great Brother" or "He who stands before God." He is the God of true faith whom one must strive to approach and, in doing so, break the domination of the three "leaders of the world," who rule the earth at this moment, imposing upon it an unfitting system of law. The position of "the Great Brother" is connected in some way with the *Shekhinah*, which becomes in Frank's terminology the "maiden" (*almah*) or "virgin" (*betulah*). It is obvious that he tried consciously to make this concept conform as closely as possible to the Christian concept of the virgin. Just as the extreme Shabbateans from the sect of Barukhyah saw in Shabbetai Zevi and Barukhyah an incarnation of *Malka Kaddisha*, who is the "God of Israel," so Frank referred to himself as the messenger of "the Great Brother." According to him, all the great religious leaders, from the patriarchs to Shabbetai Zevi and Barukhyah, had endeavored to find the way to his God, but had not succeeded.

In order that God and the virgin be revealed, it would be necessary to embark upon a completely new road, untrodden as yet by the people of Israel: this road Frank called "the way to Esau." In this context, Esau or Edom symbolizes the unbridled flow of life which liberates man because its force and power are not subject to any law. The patriarch Jacob promised (Gen. 33:14) to visit his brother Esau in Seir, but Scripture does not mention that he fulfilled his promise, because the way was too difficult for him. Now the time had come to set out on this way, which leads to the "true life," a central idea which in Frank's system carries with it the specific connotation of freedom and licentiousness. This path was the road to consistent religious anarchy: "The place to which we are going is not subject to any law, because all that is on the side of death; but we are going to life." In order to achieve this goal it was necessary to abolish and destroy the laws, teachings, and practices which constrict the power of life, but this must be done in secret; in order to accomplish it, it was essential outwardly to assume the garb of the corporeal Edom, i.e., Christianity. The "believers," or at least their vanguard, had already passed through Judaism and Islam, and they now had to complete their journey by assuming the Christian faith, using it and its ideas in order to conceal the real core of their belief in Frank as the true Messiah and the living God for whom their Christian protestations were really intended.

The motto which Frank adopted here was *massa dumah* (from Isa. 21:11), taken to mean "the burden of silence"; that is, it was necessary to bear the heavy burden of the hidden faith in the abolition of all law in utter silence, and it was forbidden to reveal anything to those outside the fold. Jesus of Nazareth was no more than the husk preceding and concealing the fruit, who was Frank himself. Although it was necessary to ensure an outward demonstration of Christian allegiance, it was forbidden to mix with Christians or to intermarry with them, for in the final analysis Frank's vision was of a Jewish future, albeit in a rebellious and revolutionary form, presented here as a messianic dream.

The concepts employed by Frank were popular and anecdotal, and the rejection of the traditional kabbalistic symbolic terminology, which was beyond the comprehension of simple people, called into play the imaginative faculty. Frank therefore prepared his followers in Iwanie to accept baptism as the final step which would open before them, in a real physical sense, the way to Esau, to the world of the gentiles. Even in the organization of this sect Frank imitated the evangelical tradition: he appointed in Iwanie twelve emissaries (apostles) or "brothers," who were considered his chief disciples. But at the same time he appointed twelve "sisters," whose main distinction was to serve as Frank's concubines. Continuing the tradition of Barukhyah's sect, Frank also instituted licentious sexual practices among the "believers," at least among his more intimate "brothers" and "sisters." His followers who had been used to acting in this way did not see anything blameworthy in it, but they did not take kindly to this request that they eradicate from their midst all kabbalistic books, which had been superseded by Frank's teaching, and many of them continued to use ideas from Shabbatean Kabbalah, mixing them up in their writings with Frank's new symbols.

The group remained in Iwanie for several months until the spring of 1759. Frank established there a common fund, apparently in emulation of the New Testament account of the early Christian community. During this time, when they came into close contact with Frank, people were overcome and dominated by his powerful personality, which was compounded of limitless ambition and

cunning, together with a facility of expression and marked imaginative faculty which even had a tinge of poetry. Perhaps it can be said of Frank that he was a mixture of despotic ruler, popular prophet, and cunning impostor.

The Disputation in Lvov

As events unfolded, an intermingling of two tendencies became manifest. On the one hand, it became clear to Frank and his disciples that they could not remain halfway between Judaism and Christianity. If they wished to restore their position after the severe persecutions they had suffered, baptism was the only course left open to them. They were even prepared to make a public demonstration of their conversion to Christianity, as the priests required as the price for their protection. On the other hand, there were quite different interests among important sections of the Church in Poland who from the very beginning did not associate themselves with the Frankist cause.

At this time there were several instances of the blood libel in Poland, which were supported by some influential bishops and leading clergy. The Council of the Four Lands, Polish Jewry's supreme organized authority, was trying to act indirectly through different mediators with the ecclesiastical authorities in Rome, laying grave charges of deceit and insolence against those responsible for the promulgation of the blood libel. Their words did not go unheeded in Rome. It would appear that some priests in the bishoprics of Kamieniec and Lvov saw a good chance of strengthening their position with regard to the question of the blood libel, if Jews who represented a whole group could be found to come forward and verify this unfounded accusation. At the end of February 1759, when their position at Iwanie was at its peak, Frank's disciples requested Archbishop LubieGski in Lvov to receive them into the Church, claiming to speak in the name of "the Jews of Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Moldavia, Italy, etc." They asked to be given a second opportunity to dispute publicly with the rabbinic Jews, devotees of the Talmud, and promised to demonstrate the truth not only of the tenets of Christianity but also of the blood libel. Without doubt, the text of this request was composed after consultation with priestly circles and was formulated by the Polish nobleman Moliwda (Ignacy Kossakowski, who had once been head of the Philippovan sect), who was Frank's adviser in all these negotiations, right up to the actual baptism. LubieGski himself was not able to deal with the affair, since he was appointed archbishop of Gniezno and primate of the Polish Church. He handed over the conduct of the case to his administrator in Lvov, Mikulski, a priest who became extremely active in the preparation of the great disputation in Lvov, which was planned to end in mass baptism and verification of the blood libel.

In the months that followed, the Frankists continued to send various petitions to the king of Poland and to the ecclesiastical authorities in order to clarify their intentions, and to ask for specific favors even after their conversion. They claimed that 5,000 of their adherents were prepared to accept baptism, but at the same time requested that they be allowed to lead a separate existence as Christians of Jewish identity: they should not be compelled to shave their "sideburns" (*pe'ot*); they should be allowed to wear traditional Jewish garb even after conversion, and to call themselves by Jewish names in addition to their new Christian names; they should not be forced to eat pork; they should be allowed to rest on Saturday as well as on Sunday; and they should be permitted to retain the books of the Zohar and other kabbalistic writings. In addition to all this, they should be allowed to marry only among themselves and not with anyone else. In return for being allowed to constitute this quasi-Jewish unit, they expressed their willingness to submit to the other demands of the Church. In other petitions they added the request that they should be assigned a special area of settlement in Eastern Galicia, including the cities of Busk and Gliniany, most of whose Jewish inhabitants were members of the sect. In this territory they promised to maintain the life of their own community, and to establish their own communal life, setting up a "productivization" in contrast to the economic structure of the usual Jewish community. Some of these petitions, printed by the priests in Lvov in 1795, circulated very widely and were translated from Polish into French, Spanish, Latin, and Portuguese; they were also reprinted in Spain and Mexico and went through several editions there. The very presentation of these requests proves that Frank's followers had no thought of assimilating or of mixing with true Christians, but sought to gain for themselves a special recognized position, like that of the Doenmeh in Salonika, under the protection of both Church and State. It is obvious that they looked upon themselves as a new type of Jew and had no intention of renouncing their national Jewish identity. These petitions also show that the more extreme pronouncements of Frank within the closed circle of his followers had not wholly taken root in their hearts and they were not prepared to follow him in every detail. The prohibition against intermarriage with gentiles reiterates Frank's own words in Iwanie, yet on other matters there was apparently lively dispute between Frank and his followers. However, these isolated requests constituted only a transitional stage in the struggle which preceded the disputation in Lvov; and the spokesmen of the sect received a negative reply. The requirement of the Church was baptism without any precondition, although at this time the priests were convinced that the Frankists' intention was sincere, since they paid no heed to Jewish representatives who warned them continually about the secret Shabbatean beliefs of those who were offering themselves for baptism. The enormous publicity given to these events after the disputation at Kamieniec stimulated missionary activity on the part of some Protestant groups. Count Zinzendorf, head of "the Fellowship of the Brethren" (later the Moravian Church) in Germany, sent the convert David Kirchhof in 1758 on a special mission to "the believers" in Podolia in order to preach to them his version of "pure Christianity" (*Judaica*, 19 (1963), 240). Among the mass of Jews, the idea spread that Frank was in reality a great sorcerer with far-reaching demonic powers, prompting the growth of various legends, which had wide repercussions, concerning his magic deeds and his success.

The Frankists tried to postpone the disputation until January 1760, when many of the nobility and merchants would gather for religious ceremonies and for the great fair at Lvov. Apparently they hoped for considerable financial help because of their economic situation had suffered as a result of persecution. The authorities in Rome and Warsaw did not regard the proposed disputation favorably and, for reasons of their own, sided with the Jewish arguments against a disputation, especially one which was likely to provoke disturbances and unrest as a result of the section on the blood libel. The raising of this subject, with all the inherent risk of organized and unbridled incitement against rabbinic Judaism, was equally sure to plunge the Polish Jewish

authorities into profound anxiety. In this conflict of interests between the higher authorities, who wanted the straightforward conversion of Frank's followers without any disputation, and those groups who were concerned mainly with the success of the blood libel, Mikulski acted according to his own views and sided with the latter. He therefore fixed an early date for the disputation, July 16, 1759, to be held in Lvov Cathedral, and he obliged the rabbis of his diocese to attend.

The disputation opened on July 17, attended by crowds of Poles, and was conducted intermittently at several sessions until September 10. The arguments of both sides, the theses of the "contra-talmudists" and the answers of the rabbis, were presented in writing, but in addition vehement oral disputes took place. About 30 men appeared for the rabbis, and 10–20 for the sectarians. However, the number of the actual participants was smaller. The chief spokesman, and the man who bore the main responsibility on the Jewish side, was R. Hayyim Kohen Rapoport, the leading rabbi of Lvov, a highly respected man of great spiritual stature. Supporting him were the rabbis of Bohorodczany and Stanislawow. The tradition which sprang up in popular accounts circulating years later that Israel b. Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, was also a participant, has no historical foundation. Frank himself took part only in the last session of the disputation when the blood libel question was debated. The sect's spokesmen were three scholars who had previously been active in Podolia among the followers of Barukhyah: Leib b. Nathan Krisa from Nodwana, R. Nahman from Krzywicze, and Solomon b. Elisha Shor from Rohatyn. After each session, consultations took place between the rabbis and the *parnasim*, who drafted written replies. They were joined by a wine merchant from Lvov, Baer Birkenthal of Bolechov, who, unlike the rabbis, spoke fluent Polish, and he prepared the Polish text of their replies. His memoirs of the disputation in *Sefer Divrei Binah* fill in the background of the official protocol which was drawn up in Polish by the priest Gaudenty Pikulski, and printed in Lvov in 1760 with the title *ZGocB pydowska* ("The Jewish Evil"). In Lvov the Frankists' arguments were presented in a form accommodated as far as possible to the tenets of Christianity, to an even greater extent than at the earlier disputation. However, even then, they avoided any explicit reference to Jesus of Nazareth, and there is no doubt that this silence served the express purpose of harmonizing their secret faith in Frank as God and Messiah in a corporeal form with their official support of Christianity. Indeed, according to Frank himself, Christianity was no more than a screen (*pargod*) behind which lay hidden the true faith, which he proclaimed to be "the sacred religion of Edom."

Seven main propositions were disputed:

- (1) all the biblical prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah have already been fulfilled;
- (2) the Messiah is the true God who became incarnate in human form in order to suffer for the sake of our redemption;
- (3) since the advent of the true Messiah, the sacrifices and the ceremonial laws of the Torah have been abolished;
- (4) everyone must follow the religion of the Messiah and his teaching, for within it lies the salvation of the soul;
- (5) the cross is the sign of the divine trinity and the seal of the Messiah;
- (6) only through baptism can a man arrive at true faith in the Messiah; and
- (7) the Talmud teaches that the Jews need Christian blood, and whoever believes in the Talmud is bound to use it.

The rabbis refused to reply to some of these theses for fear of being offensive to the Christian faith in their answers. The disputation began at the behest of the Frankists with a statement by their protector Moliwda Kossadowski. The rabbis replied only to the first and second of the theological arguments. It was obvious from the outset that the main attention would be centered on the seventh proposition, whose effects were potentially highly dangerous for the whole of Jewry. This particular argument came up for discussion on August 27. In the preceding weeks Frank had left Iwanie and passed through the cities of Galicia, visiting his followers. He then waited a long time in Busk, near Lvov, where he was joined by his wife and children. The Frankist arguments in support of the blood libel are a mixture of quotations from books by earlier Polish apostates, and absurd arguments and nonsensical discussions based on statements in rabbinic literature containing only the slightest mention of "blood" or "red." According to Baer Birkenthal the rabbis too did not refrain from using literary stratagems in order to strengthen the impression that their replies would have on the Catholic priests, and in the oral debates they all rejected all Polish translations from talmudic and rabbinic literature without exception, which resulted in some violent verbal exchanges. Behind the scenes of the disputation, contacts continued between the rabbinic representatives and Mikulski, who began to waver, both because of the opposition of the higher church authorities to the blood libel and also as a result of rabbinic arguments concerning Frankist duplicity. The debate on this point was continued in the last session on September 10, when Rabbi Rapoport made a stringent attack on the blood libel. As the disputation came to an end, one of the Frankists approached the rabbi and said: "You have declared our blood permitted-this is your 'blood for blood.'" The confused ratiocinations of the Frankists did not achieve the desired effect, and, in the end, Mikulski resolved to ask the rabbis for a detailed written answer in Polish to the Frankists' charges. However, the time for their reply was postponed until after the end of the disputation. In the meantime nothing concrete emerged from all the upheaval about the blood libel.

On the other hand, the conversion of many of the Frankists did actually take place. Frank himself was received with extraordinary honor in Lvov, and he dispatched his flock to the baptismal font. He himself was the first to be baptized on Sept. 17, 1759. There is some disagreement about the number of sectarians who were converted. In Lvov alone more than 500 Frankists (including

women and children) had been baptized by the end of 1760, nearly all of them from Podolia but some from Hungary and the European provinces of Turkey. The exact numbers of converts in other places are not known, but there are details of a considerable number of baptisms in Warsaw, where Frank and his wife were baptized a second time, under the patronage of the king of Poland, in a royal ceremony, on Nov. 18, 1759; from then on he is named Josef Frank in documents. According to oral tradition in Frankist families in Poland, the number of converts was far greater than that attested by known documents, and it speaks of several thousands. On the other hand, it is known that most of the sectarians in Podolia, and in other countries, did not follow Frank all the way, but remained in the Jewish fold, although they still recognized his leadership. It would appear that all his followers in Bohemia and Moravia, and most of those in Hungary and Rumania, remained Jews and continued to lead a double life, outwardly Jews and secretly "believers." Even in Galicia there remained many cells of "believers" in an appreciable number of communities, from Podhajce (Podgaytsy) in the east to Cracow in the west.

The Social Structure of the Sect

Contradictory evidence exists concerning the social and spiritual makeup of the sectarians, both of the apostates and of those who remained within the Jewish fold, but perhaps the two types of evidence are really complementary. Many sources, particularly from the Jewish side, show that a sizeable proportion of them were knowledgeable and literate, and even rabbis of small communities. Frank's closest associates among the apostates were doubtless in this category. As far as their social status was concerned, some were wealthy and owners of property, merchants and, craftsmen such as silver- and goldsmiths; some were the children of community leaders. On the other hand, a considerable number of them were distillers and innkeepers, simple people and members of the poorer classes. In Moravia and Bohemia they included a number of wealthy and aristocratic families, important merchants and state monopoly leaseholders, while in the responsa of contemporary rabbis (and also in the hasidic *Shivhei ha-Besht*) incidents are related concerning scribes and *shohatim* who were also members of the sect. In Sziget, Hungary, a "judge of the Jews" (*Judenrichter*) is numbered among them, as well as several important members of the community.

The uncovering of the sect, which had hitherto practiced in secret, and the mass apostasy which had taken place in several of the Polish communities, received wide publicity and had various repercussions. The attitude of the Jewish spiritual leaders was not uniform, many rabbis taking the view that their separation from the Jewish community and their defection to Christianity were in fact desirable for the good of the Jewish people as a whole (A. Yaari in *Sinai*, 35 (1954), 170–82). They hoped that all the members of the sect would leave the Jewish fold, but their hopes were not realized. A different view was expressed by Israel Ba'al Shem Tov after the disputation at Lvov, namely, that "the *Shekhinah* bewails the sect of the apostates, for while the limb is joined to the body there is hope of a cure, but once the limb is amputated, there can be no possible remedy, for every Jew is a limb of the *Shekhinah*." Nahman of Bratslav, a great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, said that his great-grandfather died of the grief inflicted by the sect and their apostasy. In many Polish communities traditions were preserved concerning Frankist families who had not apostasized, while those who were particular about family honor took care not to marry into these families because of the suspicion of illegitimacy (see *mamzer*) which attached to them through their transgression of the sexual prohibitions.

Frank's Arrest

Frank's journey to Warsaw in great pomp in October 1759 provoked a number of scandalous incidents, particularly in Lublin. Even after their apostasy Frank's followers were continually watched by the priests who had doubts about their reliability and the sincerity of their conversion. Records vary of the evidence given to the ecclesiastical authorities of their real faith, and it is possible that these did in fact emanate from different sources. It was G. Pikulski in particular who in December 1759 obtained separate confessions from six of the "brethren" who had remained in Lvov, and it became apparent from these that the real object of their devotion was Frank, as the living incarnation of God. When this information reached Warsaw, Frank was arrested, on Feb. 6, 1760, and for three weeks he was subjected to a detailed investigation by the ecclesiastical court, which also confronted with many of the "believers" who had accompanied him to Warsaw. Frank's testimony before the inquiry was a mixture of lies and half-truths. The court's decision was to exile him for an unlimited period to the fortress of Czystochowa which was under the highest jurisdiction of the Church, "in order to prevent him having any possible influence on the views of his followers." These latter were set free and ordered to adopt Christianity in true faith, and to forsake their leader—a result which was not achieved. Nevertheless, the "treachery" of his followers in revealing their true beliefs rankled bitterly with Frank until the end of his days. The court also issued a printed proclamation on the results of the inquiry. At the end of February Frank was exiled and remained in "honorable" captivity for 13 years. At first he was utterly deserted, but he quickly found ways of reestablishing contact between himself and his "camp." At this time the apostates were scattered in several small towns and on estates owned by the nobility. They suffered a good deal until they finally settled down, mainly in Warsaw, with the remainder in other Polish towns like Cracow and Krasnystaw, and organized themselves into a secret sectarian society, whose members were careful to observe outwardly all the tenets of the Catholic faith. They also took advantage of the unstable political situation in Poland at the end of its independence, and several of the more important families demanded noble status for themselves, with some degree of success, on the basis of old statutes which accorded such privileges to Jewish converts.

Frank in Czystochowa

From the end of 1760 emissaries from the "believers" began to visit Frank and transmit his instructions. Following these, they became once more involved in a blood libel case in the town of Wojsławice in 1761, as the result of which many Jews were slaughtered. Their reappearance as accusers of the Jewish people aroused great bitterness among the Jews of Poland, who saw in

it a new act of vengeance. The conditions of Frank's imprisonment were gradually relaxed and from 1762 his wife was allowed to join him, while a whole group of his chief followers, both men and women, were allowed to settle near the fortress, and even to practice secret religious rites of a typical sexual orgiastic nature inside the fortress. When talking to this circle Frank added a specifically Christian interpretation to his view of the virgin as the *Shekhinah*, under the influence of the worship of the virgin which, in Poland, was actually centered on Czestochowa.

In 1765, when it was apparent that the country was about to break up, Frank planned to forge links with the Russian Orthodox Church and with the Russian government through a Russian ambassador in Poland, Prince Repnin. A Frankist delegation went to Smolensk and Moscow at the end of the year and promised to instigate some pro-Russian activity among the Jews, but the details are not known. It is possible that clandestine links between the Frankist camp and the Russian authorities date from this time. These plans became known to the Jews of Warsaw, and in 1767 a counterdelegation was sent to St. Petersburg in order to inform the Russians of the Frankists' true character. From then on, Frankist propaganda spread once more through the communities of Galicia, Hungary, Moravia, and Bohemia, by means of letters and emissaries from among the learned members of the sect. Links were also formed with secret Shabbateans in Germany. One of these emissaries, Aaron Isaac Te'omim from Horodenka, appeared in Altona in 1764. In 1768–69 there were two Frankist agents in Prague and Possnitz, the *Shabbatean* center in Moravia, and there they were even allowed to preach in the synagogue. At the beginning of 1770 Frank's wife died, and thenceforth the worship of "the lady" (*gevurah*), which was accorded her during her lifetime, was transferred to Frank's daughter Eva (previously Rachel), who stayed with him even when practically all of his "believers" had left the fortress and gone to Warsaw. When Czestochowa was captured by the Russians in August 1772, after the first partition of Poland, Frank was freed by the commander in chief and left the town early in 1773, going with his daughter to Warsaw. From there, in March 1773, he journeyed with 18 of his associates disguised as the servants of a wealthy merchant to Bruenn (Brno) in Moravia, to the home of his cousin Schoendel Dobruschka, the wife of a rich and influential Jew.

Frank in Bruenn and Offenbach

Frank remained in Bruenn until 1786, obtaining the protection of the authorities, both as a respected man of means with many connections and also as a man pledged to work for the propagation of Christianity among his numerous associates in the communities of Moravia. He established a semi-military regime in his retinue, where the men wore military uniform and went through a set training. Frank's court attracted many Shabbateans in Moravia, whose families preserved for generations the swords that they wore while serving at his court. Frank went with his daughter to Vienna in March 1775 and was received in audience by the empress and her son, later Joseph II. Some maintain that Frank promised the empress the assistance of his followers in a campaign to conquer parts of Turkey, and in fact over a period of time several Frankist emissaries were sent to Turkey, working hand in glove with the Doenmeh, and perhaps as political agents or spies in the service of the Austrian government. During this period Frank spoke a great deal about a general revolution which would overthrow kingdoms, and the Catholic Church in particular, and he also dreamed of the conquest of some territory in the wars at the end of time which would be the Frankist dominion. For this, military training would be a deliberate preparation. Where Frank obtained the money for the upkeep of his court was a constant source of wonder and speculation and the matter was never resolved; doubtless some system of taxation was organized among the members of the sect. Stories circulated about the arrival of barrels of gold sent, some say, by his followers, but according to others, by his foreign political "employers." At one particular period there were in Bruenn several hundred sectarians who followed no profession or trade, and whose sole and absolute master was Frank, who ruled with a rod of iron. In 1784 his financial resources failed temporarily and he found himself in great straits, but his situation subsequently improved. During his stay in Bruenn the greater part of his teachings, his recollections, and his tales were taken down by his chief associates. In 1786 or 1787 he left Bruenn, and, after bargaining with the prince of Ysenburg, established himself in Offenbach, near Frankfurt.

In Bruenn and Offenbach, Frank and his three children played a part, which was unusually successful for a long time, in order to throw dust in the eyes of both the inhabitants and the authorities. While pretending to follow the practices of the Catholic Church, at the same time they put on a show of strange practices, deliberately "Eastern" in nature, in order to emphasize their exotic character. In his last years Frank began to spread even among his close associates the notion that his daughter Eva was in reality the illegitimate daughter of the empress Catherine of the house of Romanov, and that he was no more than her guardian. Outwardly, the Frankists shrank from social contact with Jews, so much so that many of those who had business or other dealings with the latter refused absolutely to believe Jewish charges concerning the true nature of the community as a secret Jewish sect. Even in the printed proclamations issued in Offenbach, Frank's children based their authority on their strong ties with the Russian royal house. There is some reliable evidence to show that even the prince of Ysenburg's administration believed that Eva should be regarded as a Romanov princess.

The last center of the sect was set up in Offenbach, where members sent their sons and daughters to serve at the court, following the pattern that had been established in Bruenn. Frank had several apoplectic fits, dying on Dec. 10, 1791. His funeral was organized as a glorious demonstration by hundreds of his "believers." Frank had preserved to the end his double way of life and sustained the legendary Oriental atmosphere with which his life was imbued in the sight of both Jews and Christians.

In the period between Frank's apostasy and his death the converts strengthened their economic position, particularly in Warsaw where many of them built factories and were also active in masonic organizations. A group of about 50 Frankist families, led by Anton Czerniewski, one of Frank's chief disciples, settled in Bukovina after his death and were known there as the sect of Abrahamites; their descendants were still living a separate life there about 125 years later. Several families in Moravia and Bohemia, who had remained within the Jewish fold, also improved their social status, had close connections with the Haskalah

movement, and began to combine revolutionary mystical kabbalistic ideas with the rationalistic view of the Enlightenment. Some of those who had converted in these countries under Frank's influence were accepted in the higher administration and the Austrian aristocracy, but they preserved a few Frankist traditions and customs, so that a stratum was created in which the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity became blurred, irrespective of whether the members had converted or retained their links with Judaism.

Only rarely did whole groups of Frankists convert to Christianity, as in Prossnitz in 1773, but a considerable proportion of the younger members who were sent to Offenbach were baptized there. Enlightening examples of family histories from the intermediate stratum mentioned above are those of the Hoenig (see Hoenigsberg) and Dobruschka families in Austria. Some of the Hoenig family remained Frankist Jews even after their elevation to the nobility, and some of them were connected with the upper bourgeoisie and the higher Austrian administration (the families of Von Hoenigsberg, Von Hoenigstein, Von Bienefeld), while members of the Dobruschka family converted practically en bloc and several of them served as officers in the army. Moses, the son of Schoendel Dobruschka, Frank's cousin, who was known in many circles as his nephew, was the outstanding figure in the last generation of the Frankists, being known also as Franz Thomas von Schoenfeld (a German writer and organizer of a mystical order of a Jewish Christian kabbalistic character) and later as Junius Frey (a Jacobin revolutionary in France).

Apparently he was offered the leadership of the sect after Frank's death, and, when he refused, Eva, together with her two younger brothers, Josef and Rochus, assumed responsibility for the direction of the court. Many people continued to go up to Offenbach, to "*Gottes Haus*" as the "believers" called it. However, Frank's daughter and her brothers had neither the stature nor the strength of personality required, and their fortunes quickly declined. The only independent activity that emerged from Offenbach was the dispatch of the "Red Letters" to hundreds of Jewish communities in Europe in 1799 relating to the beginning of the 19th century. In these letters the Jews were requested for the last time to enter "The holy religion of Edom." By 1803 Offenbach was almost completely deserted by the camp of the "believers," hundreds of whom had returned to Poland, while Frank's children were reduced to poverty. Josef and Rochus died in 1807 and 1813 respectively, without heirs, and Eva Frank died in 1816, leaving enormous debts. In Eva's last years a few members of the most respected families in the sect, who were supported from Warsaw, remained with her. In the last 15 years of her life she acted as if she were a royal princess of the house of Romanov, and several circles tended to believe the stories circulating in support of this.

The sect's exclusive organization continued to survive in this period through agents who went from place to place, through secret gatherings and separate religious rites, and through the dissemination of a specifically Frankist literature. The "believers" endeavored to marry only among themselves, and a wide network of inter-family relationships was created among the Frankists, even among those who had remained within the Jewish fold. Later Frankism was to a large extent the religion of families who had given their children the appropriate education. The Frankists of Germany, Bohemia, and Moravia usually held secret gatherings in Carlsbad in summer round about the Ninth of Av.

Frankist Literature

The literary activity of the sect began at the end of Frank's life, and was centered at first at Offenbach in the hands of three learned "elders," who were among his chief disciples: the two brothers Franciszek and Michael WoGowski (from the well-known rabbinic family, Shor) and Andreas Dembowski (Yeruham Lippmann from Czernowitz). At the end of the 18th century they compiled a collection of Frank's teachings and reminiscences, containing nearly 2,300 sayings and stories, gathered together in the book *Slowa PaGskie* ("The words of the Master"; Heb. *Divrei ha-Adon*), which was sent to circles of believers. The book was apparently written originally in Hebrew since it was quoted in this language by the Frankists of Prague. In order to meet the needs of the converts in Poland, whose children no longer learned Hebrew, it was translated, apparently in Offenbach, into very poor Polish which needed later revisions to give it a more polished style. This comprehensive book illuminates Frank's true spiritual world, as well as his relationship with Judaism, Christianity, and the members of his sect. A few complete manuscripts were preserved in a number of families in Poland, and some were acquired by public libraries and consulted by the historians Kraushar and Balaban. These manuscripts were destroyed or lost during the Holocaust, and now only two imperfect manuscripts in Cracow University Library are known, comprising about two-thirds of the complete text. Also in Offenbach, a detailed chronicle was compiled of events in the life of Frank, which gave far more reliable information than all other documents, in which Frank did not refrain from telling lies. It also contained a detailed and undisguised description of the sexual rites practiced by Frank. This manuscript was lent to Kraushar by a Frankist family, but since then it has vanished without trace. The work of an anonymous Frankist, written in Polish about 1800 and called "The Prophecy of Isaiah," which puts the metaphors of the biblical book to Frankist use, gives a reliable record of the revolutionary and utopian expectations of the members of the sect. This manuscript, parts of which were published in Kraushar's book, was in the library of the Warsaw Jewish community until the Holocaust. A book was recorded in Offenbach which listed the dreams and revelations of which Eva Frank and her brothers boasted, but when two younger members of the Porges family in Prague, who had been sent to the court and been disillusioned with what they saw, fled from Offenbach, they took the book with them and handed it over to the rabbinical court in Fuerth, who apparently destroyed it.

The Frankists in Prague

Another center of intensive literary activity emerged in Prague, where an important Frankist group had established itself. At its head were several members of the distinguished Wehle and Bondi families, whose forebears had belonged to the secret Shabbatean movement for some generations. They had strong connections with "the believers" in other communities in Bohemia

and Moravia. Their spiritual leader, Jonas Wehle (1752–1823), was aided by his brothers, who were fervent Frankists, and his son-in-law Loew von Hoenigsberg (d. 1811), who committed to writing many of the teachings of the circle. This group acted with great prudence for a long time, particularly during the lifetime of R. Ezekiel Landau, and its members denied in his presence that they belonged to the sect. However, after his death they became more conspicuous. In 1799 R. Eleazar Fleckeles, Landau's successor, preached some fiercely polemical sermons against them, causing riotous disturbances in the Prague synagogue, and leading to the publication of libelous attacks on the group, as well as to both denunciations and defense of its members before the civil authorities. A great deal of evidence, extracted from "penitent" members of the sect in Kolin and other places, remains from this period. The important file on the Frankists in the Prague community archives was removed by the president of the community at the end of the 19th century, out of respect for the families implicated in it. The disturbances connected with the appearance of the "Red Letters" (written in red ink, as a symbol of the religion of Edom) helped to maintain a small, distinct Frankist group in Prague for years, and some of its members, or their children, were later among the founders of the first Reform temple in Prague (c. 1832). A similar distinct group existed for a long time in Prossnitz. Some of the literature of the Prague circle survived, namely, a commentary on the *aggadot* of *Ein Ya'akov* and a large collection of letters on details of the faith, as well as commentaries on various biblical passages written in German mixed with Yiddish and Hebrew by Loew Hoenigsberg in the early 19th century. Aaron Jellinek possessed various Frankist writings in German, but they disappeared after his death.

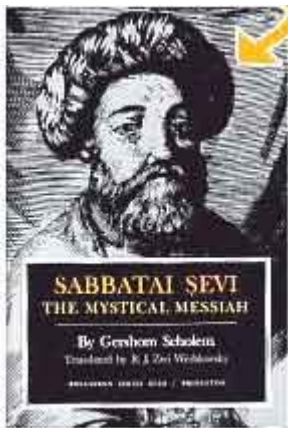
On Eva Frank's death the organization weakened, although in 1823 Elias Kaplinski, a member of Frank's wife's family, still tried to summon a conference of the sectarians, which took place in Carlsbad. After this the sect broke up, and messengers were sent to collect together the various writings from the scattered families. This deliberate concealment of Frankist literature is one of the main reasons for the ignorance concerning its internal history, allied to the decided reluctance of most of the sectarians' descendants to promote any investigation into their affairs. The only one of "the believers" who left any memoirs of his early days was Moses Porges (later Von Portheim). These he had recorded in his old age. A whole group of Frankist families from Bohemia and Moravia migrated to the United States in 1848–49. In his last will and testament, Gottlieb Wehle of New York, 1867, a nephew of Jonas Wehle, expresses a deep feeling of identity with his Frankist forebears, who appeared to him to be the first fighters for progress in the ghetto, a view held by many of the descendants of "the believers." The connection between the Frankists' heretical Kabbalah and the ideas of the new Enlightenment is evident both in surviving manuscripts from Prague, and in the traditions of some of these families in Bohemia and Moravia (where there were adherents of the sect, outside Prague, in Kolin, Horschitz (Horice), Holleschau (Holesov), and Kojetin).

There continued to be strong ties between the neophyte families in Poland, who had risen considerably in the social scale in the 19th century, and there may have been some kind of organization among them. In the first three generations after the apostasy of 1759/60 most of them married only among themselves, preserving their Jewish character in several ways, and only a very few intermarried with true Catholics. Copies of "the Words of the Master" were still being produced in the 1820s, and apparently it had its readers. The Frankists were active as fervent Polish patriots and took part in the rebellions of 1793, 1830, and 1863. Nevertheless the whole time they were under suspicion of Jewish sectarian separatism. In Warsaw in the 1830s most of the lawyers were descendants of the Frankists, many of whom were also businessmen, writers, and musicians. It was only in the middle of the 19th century that mixed marriages increased between them and the Poles, and most of them moved from the liberal wing of Polish society to the nationalist conservative wing. However, there still remained a number of families who continued to marry only among themselves. For a long time this circle maintained secret contacts with the Doenmeh in Salonika. An unresolved controversy still exists concerning the Frankist affiliation of Adam Mickiewicz, the greatest Polish poet. There is clear evidence of this from the poet himself (on his mother's side), but in Poland this evidence is resolutely misinterpreted. Mickiewicz's Frankist origins were well-known to the Warsaw Jewish community as early as 1838 (according to evidence in the *AZDJ* of that year, p. 362). The parents of the poet's wife also came from Frankist families.

The crystallization of the Frankist sect is one of the most marked indications of the crisis which struck the Jewish society in the mid-18th century. Frank's personality reveals clear signs of the adventurer, motivated by a blend of religious impulses and a lust for power. By contrast, his "believers" were on the whole men of deep faith and moral integrity as far as this did not conflict with the vicious demands made on them by Frank. In all that remains of their original literature whether in German, Polish or Hebrew, there is absolutely no reference to those matters, like the blood libel, which so aroused the Jewish community against them. They were fascinated by the words of their leader and his vision of a unique fusion between Judaism and Christianity, but they easily combined this with more modest hopes which led them to become protagonists of liberal-bourgeois ideals. Their nihilist *Shabbatean* faith served as a transition to a new world beyond the ghetto. They quickly forgot their licentious practices and acquired a reputation of being men of the highest moral conduct. Many Frankist families kept a miniature of Eva Frank which used to be sent to the most prominent households, and to this day some families honor her as a saintly woman who was falsely reviled.

[Gershon Scholem]

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